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הרכבת

A Quarterly Journal on the Railways of the Middle East
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69:1 An IC3 Flexiliner train #7042, one of 9 bought second hand from Sweden by the KGM Company, en route from Jerusalem to Tel-Aviv on 15.04.05



69:2.

EDITORIAL.

The Big News this quarter is of course the reopening - at last - of most of the Jerusalem line, and we make no apology for devoting a fair amount of space to this topic. IR's passenger traffic continues to rise, and the electrification plans are starting to take shape. But plenty of other things are happening too in the Middle East - though the situation in Iraq remains unstable, we include a further report. At the time of writing it does rather look as though any plans to reopen and run a line in the 'Gaza Strip' remain mere pipe-dreams. Still, we hope you find this issue of interest.

Enjoy! The Editor.

69:3.



69:4.

NEWS FROM THE LINE.

(i). STOCK DELIVERIES.

IC3 units 42 and 43 were unloaded at Kishon Port on 27.02.2005. Photos were taken by Chen Melling.

IC3 set IR No.44 (refurbished from Swedish Railways No.1374) arrived at Ashdod port on 17/4/05 aboard the SS GRANDE SCANDINAVIA. Also on board was the new Kirov-built travelling crane IR No.18 (KRC 810/2005). (Thanks to Evyatar Reiter.)

(ii). FEBRUARY 2005 STATISTICS & PLANS.

From Aharon Gazit I have received some statistical tables and an IR press release of 07.03.2005 - from which it appears that in February 2005 the passenger traffic on IR was divided:-

- 20% Tel Aviv - Haifa .
- 10% Tel Aviv - Natanya.

- 16% Tel Aviv - Ashdod.
- 12% Tel Aviv - Beer Sheva.
- 12% Tel Aviv - Nahariya.
- 05% Ashdod - Haifa - Nahariyya.

(i.e. long-distance traffic.)

- 08% Haifa - Nahariyya.
- 08% Tel Aviv - Rosh HaAyin - Kfar Saba.

- 03% Tel Aviv - Rishonim.
- 03% Tel Aviv - Ramle - Beit Shemesh.

03% Tel Aviv - Ben Gurion Airport. (Known in Hebrew as 'NaTBaG' - an acronym from the abbreviation for "Namal TESSIYA Ben Gurion".)

The actual figures and percentage increases were as follows:

- Ben Gurion Airport: 63,000.
- Tel Aviv - Ashdod line: 309,000 = + 10%.
- Tel Aviv - Netanya line: 199,000 = + 12%.
- Haifa - Nahariyya line: 162,000 = + 9%.
- Rosh HaAyin - Kfar Sava line: 156,000, = + 27%.
- Tel Aviv - HaRishonim line: 60,000, = + 40%!
- Ramla - Beit Shemesh line: 50,000 = + 28%.

The General Manager, Yossi Mor, told the press that the two newly-rebuilt lines, Beit Shemesh - Jerusalem Malkha,

and Tel Aviv - Ashkelon, will open on 09.04.2005, together with the introduction of the new summer timetable and the opening of the new stations of Jerusalem Malkha, Jerusalem Biblical Zoo and Ashkelon; later in 2005 the new stations of Petach Tikva-Kiryat Arie, Kfar Sava - Sokolov, Beer Sheva University and Dimona will be opened. The traffic forecast for 2005 is 26 million.

(iii). JERUSALEM LINE SERVICE PLANS.

In a press release from the Ministry of Transport of 20.03.2005, Meir Shitreet announced:-

"Good news for the people of Beit Shemesh and the area, who will enjoy revival of rail services to Jerusalem from 09.04.2005, after an absence of seven years.

There will be 30 trains daily, i.e. 15 in each direction, covering the distance of about 84km. in 73 minutes, calling outside Tel Aviv at Lod, Ramla, Beit Shemesh and Malkha. the first train will depart Tel Aviv at 05.39 and the last at 20.34. From Jerusalem the service will start at 06.14 and end at 21.09. Four trains will also call at the Biblical Zoo station. [Why only four? Ed.]

The time-saving compared to the pre-upgraded line is about 25 minutes; however, the line is also shorter by about 3km., since the rest of the old line to the former Jerusalem station is not restored. The price will be about \$4.36 between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, slightly higher than by bus which is \$4.06, but the bus brings passengers to the Central Bus Station located at the city's western entrance, whereas the railway line will serve the southern part of the city. [i.e. not the centre. Ed.] The real comparison will come when the fast rail link A1 will open, around 2009, with only 28 minutes' travelling time between the two cities.

The Minister added that, for the first time after seven years, Jerusalem will enjoy rail links not only with Tel Aviv and area but also to Haifa and Nahariya. He added that 'linking Jerusalem with Beit Shemesh' is of great importance; the latter area is rapidly developing - 60,000 inhabitants currently and an annual growth of 3,000 - many of whom work in Jerusalem. The line already carries 50,000 passengers monthly and the demand is growing by thousands monthly."

(iv). JERUSALEM LINE OPENING.

(i). The very first report came from intrepid reporter Sybil Ehrlich:

"Just got back from riding on the first train to Jerusalem. The driver's cab

was rather crowded, stuffed with assorted railway enthusiasts, reporters (and one who is both!) and miscellaneous others. A lot of people took the first train down as far as Beit Shemesh, and then the first train back up, just for the ride. There were, according to railway officials, 86 people on the first down train, and about 70 on the up train (the latter had nine coaches!) A smooth, uneventful journey, with a reception committee at Malkha including - no surprise - Evyatar."

(ii). The 'official' 'Jerusalem Post' report by Sybil:-

Apr. 8, 2005 8:09 | Updated Apr. 9, 2005 21:22. First train leaves Jerusalem station. By Sybil Ehrlich & Jerusalem Post Staff.

"For the first time in seven years, a train left Jerusalem on Saturday night in the inauguration of the new Jerusalem-Beit Shemesh line.

The line begins at a new station in Malkha in the valley below the shopping mall and Teddy Stadium, with another station adjacent to the Biblical Zoo.

Also on Saturday night, Ashkelon will see passenger trains for the first time since the establishment of the State of Israel.

The first train to arrive in Jerusalem will leave Hof HaCarmel station in Haifa on Saturday at 8:50 p.m., calling at Tel Aviv Central at 9:30 p.m., Beit Shemesh at 10:07 p.m. and Jerusalem-Malha at 10:45 p.m. The first train from Jerusalem leaves at 8:57 p.m. and terminates in Tel Aviv at 10:18 p.m.

Ashkelon's first train leaves at 9:59 p.m. and will arrive in Nahariya three hours later. Meanwhile, the first train into the southern city is scheduled to leave Kiryat Motzkin at 9:25 p.m. and arrive in Ashkelon eight minutes after midnight.

On weekdays, 15 trains a day in each direction will serve Jerusalem, with two in each direction also stopping at the Biblical Zoo station. There will be 11 trains on Fridays, and two in each direction on Saturday evenings. Ashkelon will have 13 trains a day from Tel Aviv and 14 in the opposite direction, with seven in each direction on Fridays and one on Saturday evenings.

The fare from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem will be NIS 19 and from Tel Aviv to Ashkelon NIS 22.50. Pensioners receive a 50 percent discount.

The railway to Jerusalem and the station in Abu Tor closed in July 1998 owing to the poor condition of the track. Work on rebuilding the line, on the old route, commenced in 2002, and the line opened in stages, first to a new station

in Ramle in April 2003, then to Beit Shemesh in September of the same year. The cost of the project, including the large new station in Malha and the small one at the zoo, was NIS 500 million.

Ashkelon saw its last passenger train during the British Mandate. Since then, the line has been used for freight trains carrying minerals from the Negev phosphate works to Ashdod Port. Trains currently terminating at Ashdod will continue to the new station in Ashkelon. The total cost of the Ashkelon project, including doubling the track later this year, will be NIS 235m."

(iii). From 'Israel Line' of Friday 08.04.2005:-

"Trains to Jerusalem Start Tomorrow. For the first time in seven years, trains will run to Jerusalem starting Saturday night, THE JERUSALEM POST reported. The line ends at a new station in Malha in the valley below the shopping mall and Teddy Stadium. On weekdays, 15 trains a day in each direction will serve Jerusalem. There will be 11 trains on Fridays, and two in each direction on Saturday evenings. The fare from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem will be NIS 19 (approximately \$4.40)

Also on Saturday night, Ashkelon will see passenger trains for the first time since the establishment of the State of Israel. Ashkelon will have 13 trains a day from Tel Aviv and 14 in the opposite direction. The fare from Tel Aviv to Ashkelon will be NIS 22.50. (approximately \$5.20)."

(v). MONTHLY GO-AS-YOU-PLEASE TICKETS.

From a press release of 22.03.2005 by the Transport Ministry. "From 01.04.2005 a monthly 'Freedom' ticket will be introduced on all the railways' Inter-City lines. So far this ticket has only been introduced on suburban services; recently the discount on monthly tickets as been increased from 25% to 35%. There has been impressive growth in sales of such tickets and Mr. Shitreet said that his aim is to encourage the use of public transport, and the railways in particular.

The prices for the new tickets (and the current Ordinary Single ticket price) will be as follows:-

Tel Aviv - Haifa line.

\$169. (\$5.62.)

Tel Aviv - Beersheba line.

\$175. (\$5.85).

Tel Aviv - Jerusalem line.

\$131. (\$4.36).

Concurrent with the new timetable, there will also be Fares Reductions on several Inter-City lines:-

Beit Shemesh to Tel Aviv and Ben-Gurion Airport. \$4.13 down from \$5.28. (ca. 23 NIS)

Beit Shemesh to Rosh HaAyin and Kfar Sava \$6.54 down from \$6.77.

Beit Shemesh to Bnei Berak \$5.16 down from \$5.28.

Beit Shemesh to Petah Tikva Segula \$5.73 down from \$5.85.

All four routes will enjoy a further price reduction when the Lod - Rosh HaAyin line, currently used for freight only, will reopen to passenger services, also saving at least 20 minutes in travel time.

[Ed. adds - Note that my information is now given in US dollars rather than Israeli (New) Shekels.]

(vi). THREESOME.

Triple-headed trains are quite rare on IR, of course, but three G12s (Nos.120, 108, 124) were noted on 31/3/05 arriving at Haifa East at 1600 hours with a freight, presumably train 314. It is thought that, as the train was quite short and did not require three locos, one or two of them were simply being worked up to Haifa as part of the freight rather than finding paths and crews for light engine movements. G12 workings on the main line are quite infrequent nowadays which made the sight of three of these locos on one train that much more unusual.

(vii). PESACH 2005 TRAFFIC BOOM.

On 25.04.2005 the railways reached a new record in passenger traffic - 200,000; twice as many as on a regular weekday!

At some stations the railways had to hire buses as a result of the fact that many passengers were left on the platform because of overcrowded trains, even though they had bought tickets!

The "Hot item" was the reopened line to Jerusalem, and particularly the Biblical Zoo station - with 15,000 journeys, compared with 4,000 on a regular weekday!

If anybody had any doubts that reopening the line was justified, these facts provide the answer (though many claim this is only due to the Passover holiday - the future will tell)! But even at the various stations of Tel-Aviv alone, 50,000 passengers passed through; twice as many as on a regular week day!

It should be mentioned that the railways added from the beginning trains on all lines, but nevertheless the demand exceeded all forecasts! This tendency was even stronger on the following day - though no figure is available as yet - and the railways administration

announced that they had quickly learned the lesson, and doubled the number of rolling stock vehicles!

(viii). APRIL 2005 STATISTICS.

From a press release of 04.05.2005 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

More than 2 million passengers were carried by the railways during April 2005, 36.7% more than in April 2004; from the beginning of 2005, the railways carried 8.61 million passengers - 22.2% more than in the same period of 2004.

The rise in passenger traffic as per lines was as following:

Ramla - Beit-Shemesh - Jerusalem line:

147000. = +305%!!

Tel-Aviv - Ashkelon line.

307000. = +36%.

Tel-Aviv - Netanya line:

185000. = +29%.

Haifa - Nahariya line:

151000. = +24%.

Tel-Aviv - Rosh-Ha-Ayin - Kfar-Sava line:

154000. = +44%.

Tel-Aviv - Rishon-Le-Zion (Rishonim) line:

60000. = +51%.

Tel-Aviv - Haifa line:

426000. = +24%.

Tel-Aviv - Nahariya line:

246000. = +17%.

No traffic data has been given about the Tel-Aviv - Beer-Sheva line.

Note: the sharp rise in the traffic on the first two lines in the list is explained by the fact that the Beit-Shemesh - Jerusalem and Ashdod - Ashkelon sections were opened on 09.04.2005, just shortly before the Passover holidays and the free entrance to the Biblical Zoo during this period, and therefore does not reflect daily traffic; we'll have to wait and see how traffic settles in the following months. Israel Railways' forecast for 2005 is for more than 26 million.

(ix). DAVID CITADEL.

Also from Aharon:- "At the David Citadel in Jerusalem, at Jaffa Gate, an exhibition of the history of the line to Jerusalem is taking place; it shows in historical pictures and films the story of the line until its temporary closure in 1998; In the garden, model trains from Europe and USA are operating, giving an illustration of a rail network; no doubt this exhibition, which attracted a lot of visitors also contributed to the unusual passenger traffic, or maybe the rail revolution to Jerusalem has really begun!!!" (See also under Notes & Comments.)

(x). IDIOTS CLOSE TEL AVIV RAILWAY STATIONS.

From Jerusalem Post Online, 15.05.2005. "Right wingers plant fake bombs in TA. By Yaakov Katz.

Police shut down two train stations in the Tel Aviv area on Sunday after right-wing opponents of the disengagement plan planted bags at the stations which aroused the suspicion of police.

The move was yet another new tactic to disrupt routine to protest disengagement from the Gaza Strip and northern West Bank.

The Arlozorov and Hahagana stations were both shut down for several hours as police sappers determined the contents of the bags.

After inspecting the bags at each station, police found they contained stones, newspapers, and notes reading: "The disengagement will explode in our faces."

(xii). TUNNELS TO MODI'IN - CONTRACTS LET.

From a press release of 19.05.2005 by Israel Railways Ltd.:

"The railways' spokesman Mr. Beny Naor, briefed the press last week that the Israeli engineering and construction company Linom had won the tender for boring two short tunnels (about 150 m long each) on the line between Ben-Gurion airport and Modi'in, south-west of Lod. This company has already bored several tunnels near Modi'in itself.

The decision to bore the \$16 million tunnels was taken as a result of ancient graves uncovered on the alignment of the line during construction; After consultation with the Archeological Authority, this has been found much easier and less complex than regular rescue works. Works on site are to start shortly, and there are hopes that, despite earlier fears, they may be completed until July 2006, so perhaps the line will open on September 2006 after all, and not as feared only at the end of December 2006."

(xiii). ELECTRIFICATION PLANS.

The tender for the electrification of IR's network was published on 26.05.2005. Numbered EL/AG/01/05 it calls for "A turnkey project for the electrification of ISR's railway network ("the Project"). The Project shall include, without limitation, the designing, erecting and commissioning of overhead contact system, transformer stations and SCADA. The Project shall be carried out

under a framework agreement, such that ISR shall be entitled at its sole discretion, at any time during a period of 12 years, to require the contractor selected in the Tender to design, erect and commission selected initial lines specified in the Tender documents as well as optional lines." Also included are maintenance services to the Project for 11 years with up to four additional periods of 4 years. Tender documents are available from 2nd. June and a Bidders Meeting will be held at IR HQ at Tel Aviv on 29th. June. Bids must then be submitted by 15th. Sept. Bidders must be companies or consortia formed of no more than four companies.

From this it appears that a 'rolling programme' over a decade or more is envisaged.

69:5.

TENDERS.

(i). HN/KB/11/05. "A12 RAILWAY LINE TO JERUSALEM, Section C."

This is an Invitation to prequalify. The project for which tenders are invited includes two single-track tunnels each of 11.6km., a bridge over the 'Yitle' stream, and an option for the construction of an approach tunnel. Stage A involves prequalification, Stage B the submission of detailed proposals, and the selection of the winning bid. The project is to be completed within 38 months of commencement of works. Submissions and proposals to be submitted by 05.05.2005.

(A later version: with a different date:- **HN/KB/11/05. INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PREQUALIFICATION FOR THE TENDER FOR A1 SECTION C FAST LINK TO JERUSALEM..** Latest bidding date: 26.05.2005.

(ii). HN/KB/17/05. FAST LINK TO JERUSALEM A1, SECTION B, AN INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PREQUALIFICATION PROCESS.

The project includes among the others:
1. Tunnel No. 1, 3.5 km long, north of Latrun Monastery.
2. Tunnel No. 2, 1.2 km long north of Sha'ar-Hagai Interchange.

The tender consists of two main stages:
Stage A - the prequalification.
Stage B - Receiving the offers and choosing the winner.

Time of implementation: 38 months.
Latest bidding date: 05.07.2005.

(iii). HN/KB/13/05. BEN GURION AIRPORT - MODI'IN LINE.

Tender No. 12, for boring tunnels 23 and 24 at Km. 166 to 175.75. Works include:-

Preparation and dismantling; boring the tunnels, each 100m. long; earthworks and paving; supporting walls and earthing in tunnels. Time for implementation: 12 months.

Note - these tunnels are very important; the Railway Administration decided to bore them in order to avoid any complications created by archaeological sites which could be encountered on the alignment, and which would have required 'rescue' excavations; these have delayed the opening of the line to Modi'in, which will now hopefully be ready by the end of 2006!

(iv). MC/KB/02/05. UPGRADING LIGHTING SYSTEM AT HAIFA KISHON WORKS.

Time for implementation: 2 months. Bids by 30.03.2005.

(v). HN/SR/07/05. PROVIDING REPAIR AND REBUILDING SERVICES

for electronic systems on the railways' engineering mechanical equipment.

The contract is for 24 months with an option for an extension of up to additional 36 months. Bids by: 03.05.2005.

(vi). MC/KB/03/05. BUILDING A CANOPY AT HAIFA EAST DIESEL DEPOT.

This will be used for an area for washing parts. Works include: concrete, metal frames, and electrical supply. Time for Implementation: 4 months. Bids by 06.04.2005.

(vii). HN/RC/02/05. MANUFACTURE AND SUPPLY OF KITS FOR GLUED INSULATED RAIL JOINTS. For a period of 3 years, with optional extension up to a further 3 years. Bids by 02.05.2005

(viii). MS/RC/2005/10. A CONTRACT FOR PRODUCING, EDITING, PUBLISHING AND DISTRIBUTING A MAGAZINE FOR RAIL PASSENGERS.

The contract is for 12 months with an option for extensions of up to additional 48 months.
Latest bidding date: 24.04.2005.

(ix). TK/KB/02/05. SIGNALLING AND COMMUNICATIONS WORKS ON THE KIRYAT MOTZKIN - NAHARIYYA LINE.

Works include: supply of various sorts of cables, uncovering, opening, and closing of existing and new concrete cable channels, laying of copper and optic cables into the channels, supplying of sub-assemblies and connecting

cables, installations and connecting of pedestals, supply and installation of end boxes and crown boxes, checking of cables relays, and dismantling bases of colour-light signal posts.

Implementation time: 6 months. Latest bidding date: 18.05.2005.

(x). BN/KB/07/05. BUILDING A REFUELLING SYSTEMS SITE AT BEER SHEVA NORTH STATION.

Works include: earth and civil engineering works, manufacture and installation of a fuel tank, pipe works, welding, electricity for instruments and control systems, painting and plating, and adding a moveable unit. Implementation time: 3 months. Latest bidding date: 23.05.2005.

(xi). TENDERS FOR OPERATING TAXI SERVICES AT THE FOLLOWING RAILWAY STATIONS.

Tender MS/RC-2005/14. At Beit-Shemesh station.

Tender MS/RC/2005/15. At Hertzliyya station.

Tender MS/RC/2005/06. At Beit-Yehoshua station (East side).

Tender MS/RC/2005/17. At Rosh-Ha-Ayin North station.

The contract is for 12 months with an optional extension for another 24 months. Latest bidding date: 26.05.2005.

(xii). MS/RC-2005/13: LICENSE TO INSTALL ACCESS POINTS AND CONNECTIONS TO WIRELESS INTERNET AT RAILWAY STATIONS.

The contract is for 12 months with an optional extension for another 24 months.

Latest bidding date: 07.06.2005.

(xiii). MS/RC/2005/10: PERMIT FOR EDITING; PRINTING; PRODUCING AND DISTRIBUTING A MAGAZINE FOR RAILWAY PASSENGERS.

An additional meeting of the bidders to be held on 26.05.05 at Tel-Aviv Savidor station. Latest bidding date: 09.06.2005.

(xiv). BN/KB/04/05: CONSTRUCTING A BUILDING FOR MAINTENANCE OF IC3 DMU'S AND A STORE NO. 42 AT HAIFA EFRAYIM (KISHON) WORKS.

Works include: earthworks, cast concrete, building, sealing, frameworks, water drainage and sanitary installations, pre-cast structures, sprinkling system, low voltage systems, etc.

Time of implementation: 12 months.
Latest bidding date: 08.06.2005.

LIGHT RAIL NEWS.

Tel Aviv's planning commission decided Tuesday 24.05.05 that the second line of a metropolitan light railway system slated to be ready in 2012 should run underground. But the Transportation Ministry came out against the proposal, saying that a subway would cost more than five times as much as an above-ground railway. The Tel Aviv project, dubbed Green Line, is budgeted at \$2.2 billion and intended to accommodate up to 50 million commuters a year.

69:7.

"HURLING FORWARD".

My thanks to Walter Zanger for a copy of an article by Matt Friedman with the above title in 'Jerusalem Report' for 07.02.2005. This deals with road as well as railway construction projects, but the following excerpts indicate the atmosphere in which planning is being carried out in Israel.

"The Trans-Israel Highway is a great road to drive.... the 53-mile highway, with its 14 interchanges, has been fully open for a year now.... from near Gederah in the south to near Haderah in the north... The plans call for the road to eventually run 180 miles from Beersheba in the Negev to Shlomi, near the Lebanese border. Coming down from Jerusalem to an interchange just below the hills, my car - one of 72,000 that will use this toll road today - slides onto the state-of-the-art Road 6, as it's also known, as a camera photographs the license plate so that a computer can mail me the bill. This sleek, convenient, soulless route is to Israel's old roads what the new Ben-Gurion Airport terminal - gleaming, spacious, impersonal - is to the old one, which was grubby and cramped and loud, and kind of felt like home.

In the last two years, much of what remained of Israel's provincial feel for the domestic traveller has been dramatically fading. The machinery of transportation - roads and rails and the hubs that link them - is undergoing a complete overhaul, as more and more asphalt is poured, earth moved and train tracks laid down, shrinking distances, reshaping the landscape and raising explosive questions about the environmental and social cost of progress.

The railway network is expanding on an unprecedented scale to hook up distant communities with the country's commercial and cultural centre. At the same time, on the other side of the debate on how Israelis should travel

between home, work and play, are those who debunk the idea of a railroad panacea looking instead to new and up-graded roads for the cars they believe commuters inevitably prefer.....

...Yoram Osidon is a 39-year old transportation consultant and a passionate - possessed, one could say - activist who has been fighting the Trans-Israel Highway since the late 190's, as the head of a group called the Israeli Forum for Public Transportation..... [he says] There should be no money for new roads, only to maintain existing ones, for safety reasons. From 1987, the country has spent 50 billion shekels on roads, but roads are not the way to hook up people on the periphery to the centre." Roads, Osidon adds, encourage urban sprawl, whereas trains concentrate people in high-density areas around stations. "The Transportation Ministry loves to talk about public transportation, but meanwhile" - he waves a hand at the meachines nearby - "they're covering the country in asphalt."

Prof. Ilan Salomon of Hebrew University's School for Public Policy, one of Israel's leading transportation experts..... disagrees. "The question is not what the overall solution is, because there isn't one.... There are different solutions for different places, and not everything is soluble. Some places need a train, and some places need a road. Road 6 was entirely necessary, and it has proved itself", Salomon asserts. The way to control traffic and push Israelis in the centre of the country - where gridlock is worst - onto buses and trains is simple, he says: Tolls. "The government could impose tolls on roads going into Tel Aviv, for example", he suggests, freeing them up for public transportation.....

The 9.43 from Beit Shemesh leaves at precisely 9.43, a double-decker train, fire-engine red, and I glide west out of the station toward Tel Aviv at the start of a 15-hour marathon on five trains and three buses crisscrossing Israel. Flat fields stretch to the right of the tracks, and citrus orchards to the left, dark green trees dotted with spots of vivid orange. Israel Railways (IR) bought 36 of these double-decker cars last year - sprucing up a fleet that still includes some ratty Yugoslavian and French cars from the 60's - with 54 more on order. The new cars are sleek and beautifully designed, and feature a disembodied, official-sounding male voice that informs you which stop is next and thanks you

politely for listening.

The Beit Shemesh line is one of the new routes that are part of IR's biggest expansion ever. Fuelled by unprecedented government spending, Israel's rail system is now spreading as fast as workers can lay down tracks, after decades during which it consisted essentially of one main line from Beersheba to Nahariya along the same route that used to lead up into Lebanon.

In 2003, fate smiled on the railway, and the government allotted it more than 20 billion shekels - over \$4 billion - over a five-year period, an amount nearly four times what had been invested in the preceding decade. IR began renovating the old run-down stations along the coastal line, refurbishing old tracks and laying new ones. A new commuter route was opened from Tel Aviv to Rosh Ha'ayin, through Bnei Brak and Kfar Saba, and a new freight line to the chemical industry zone at Ramat Hovav, in the Negev. When the new airport opened, so did its train station. In 2003, the first year of the new plan, 20 million Israelis rode the train. Last year that number jumped to 23 million, and IR expects the same percentage jump this year.

I change trains at Tel Aviv's Hahaganah station, the southernmost of the city's four stops, and nine minutes later board IR's newest addition, the two-month-old line to Ben-Gurion Airport. The airport train starts running at 2 a.m. from Nahariyah, a 100-minute trip, meaning that residents of that northern town can, as of November, make the 05.30 Alitalia flight to Milan and be there for breakfast, without any traffic along the way. At 10.45, my train pulls into an ultra-modern airport. The airport train is still limited; it doesn't yet link up with the capital, for instance - that is supposed to happen only in 2009. Still, even with the airport train serving only the coast, 85,000 Israelis have used it in just over two months.

I board the noon express from the airport north to Haifa, gliding into the new Hof Hacarmel hub less than an hour later. The old central bus station at Bat Galim - which sported peeling benches, grime and a dank tunnel that linked the bus station with the train station next door - has been all but abandoned, with intercity bus traffic now moved to two stations outside the city, both adjacent to rail stops. The old bus station has descended into the true seediness it always desired, now proudly housing a particularly sad-looking strip club.

Hof Hacarmel is an example of

the new overhaul: the train station stands next to a flashy new bus terminal, and the tiled tunnel that connects the two is decorated not with graffiti and the lingering smell of urine but with nice black-and-white photographs of Haifa buses in the old days.

The 1.54 from Hof Hacarmel whisks me back down the coast, with the blue of the Mediterranean on my right, getting me into the country's main hub, Tel Aviv's Arlosoroff station, at 2.45. Arlosoroff is now being renovated to catch up with the improvements along the line.

Israel Railways' administrative offices are here, and Yossi Mor, IR's director general, is waiting for me in his office at exactly 3.30. Mor seems to run his schedule like he runs his trains, the movements of which he follows on his desktop computer. Every time a train is late, Mor knows. Yesterday a fatal accident involving a train and a car that tried to go around a lowered crossing barrier delayed a dozen trains by more than an hour, but so far today, Mor tells me with satisfaction, everything is running on time.

Heavyside and dark, in a blue suit, Mor got his start on the railway as a young man in 1974, when his father, a train clerk, pulled strings to get him a job moving tracks and hooking up cars. Mor worked his way up, and has been IR's director general for the past year.

He has nothing against roads. "I'm not saying you need trains instead", he says. "Neither is a replacement for the other. But over the years Israel has put a lot of money into roads, and nearly none into trains. Now we're trying to catch up."

But the train has obvious advantages, he adds. For one, a train track takes up a fifth of the land occupied by a major road. A 10-car train can carry 850 people seated, and sometimes - on Fridays and Sundays, when masses of IDF soldiers are on the move from base to home and back - some of his trains carry as many as 2,500. "If a train is carrying a thousand people, it's doing the work of at least 20 buses", he says, "and polluting much less."

To add to its environmental edge, IR is moving from diesel fuel to electricity; by 2008, around 180 miles of track are supposed to be electrified. And then there's safety. While 511 Israelis were killed on the roads last year, not a single IR passenger has been killed in a train accident, ever. "All 300 million people who have ridden our trains since 1948 have arrived safely", boasts Mor. "We expect the number of passengers

to hit 65 million a year by 2010, and that's a low estimate", he predicts.

At 5.08 I'm heading to Beersheba, the southern terminus of the Israel Railways passenger system, and by 6.30 I'm there. The pleasant train station is next to a repugnant central bus station, and crossing the street is like crossing from a first world of progress into a third world of greasy felaful stands and lots of dirty cement.

In September, the expansion schedule says, there will be a rail link to Dimonah, a 30-minute drive away, but right now I have a 20-minute wait for the Egged 48 bus. It pulls up and rolls out of Beersheba, along a two-lane desert road passing scattered Beduin shacks and tents.

The government's push for trains is driven in large part by the need to connect the country's periphery with the economic engine in the centre, allowing easy access to jobs and commerce in the greater Tel Aviv area. The rail link to Dimonah, a town of 38,000 residents and with an unemployment rate of around 13 per cent, will be one of the first real tests of that plan.

Dimonah is a sleepy town, and its central bus station - a modest building and some benches - is deserted when I arrive at 7.30, except for a woman in a yellow track suit who charges one shekel to use the bathroom, and some groggy-looking Egged drivers hanging out at the Midnight Express snack bar, which caters mostly to the buses going from the centre of the country to Eilat.

A hoarse-voiced middle-aged man behind the counter sells me an uninspired cup of instant coffee. Yes, he's heard about the train, says the man, who won't give his name. But he doesn't think people are going to use it. "Who goes to Tel Aviv from here?" he asks rhetorically. "Maybe a few people a day". But won't the train allow people to live in Dimona and commute to jobs in Tel Aviv? "What jobs in Tel Aviv?" the man snorts. "People here have their unemployment benefits and they don't need to go anywhere", he explains to me before becoming bored with our conversation and wandering over to play backgammon with a blue-shirted bus driver.

Avi Ben Zikri, a spokesman for City Hall, however, has no doubt that the Dimonah train, along with planned track improvements, that will shorten travel times, will bring about nothing less than an 'economic revolution' in his town. "It will take an hour and 20 minutes to Tel Aviv", he says. "I have friends who live in Kfar Saba who spend longer

than that commuting. After September, this place will no longer be seen as the end of the world."

Ilan Salomon, the transportation expert, calls himself "something of a blasphemer" on the subject of trains. "Trains are not the answer to all of our problems, and much of the investment in them is a waste", he asserted when we spoke. "Take half of that money and put it into health and welfare and you'll be helping people more." Small towns like Dimonah simply can't provide enough passengers to justify a train, he says. And if the country is running trains to places that can't come close to filling them, the trains are both extremely wasteful in terms of cost and not the environmental saviour their supporters claim them to be.

Simply put, Salomon says, "If a train is carrying 1,000 people, it's worthwhile. If it's carrying one person, it isn't." The idea that people will abandon their cars wholesale as soon as trains are available is also misguided, he says. "That just doesn't happen. Use of private cars is on the rise, even in Western Europe, where there is excellent public transportation."

Returning to Jerusalem on an Egged bus from Beersheba - I missed the 8.44, the last train north - I tried to memorize the map of Israel's burgeoning rail lines. It will only get more complicated. Near the shopping mall at Malhah at the southwestern edge of Jerusalem, for example, a new train station is nearing completion, and the old Mandate-era tracks looping up to the capital along the Soreq River from Beit Shemesh have been replaced with new ones. The new station at Beit Shemesh, which is currently the end of a line coming from Tel Aviv through Lod, will become another stop on the route up to Jerusalem, a stunning, winding climb up through the riverbed to Malhah that is scheduled to reopen come April. The train, however, will have two disadvantages: its terminus at Malhah is far from the city's centre and from its transportation hub at the western entrance to the capital, and it will take 72 minutes to get from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, which is a bit longer than it normally takes to drive.

An answer to Jerusalem's prayers for a fast link to Tel Aviv and a way around the ferocious snarls on the highway between the two cities will arrive only in 2009; you can see hints of this in earthworks now being carried out on both sides of the Jerusalem - Tel Aviv

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OTHER MIDDLE EAST RAILWAYS.

A. SYRIA.

A press report on 15.03.05 indicated that Syria was wooing France for improved diplomatic relations, and that this included dropping heavy hints about the purchase of seven Airbus jet airliners, and "a subway in Damascus". More details are as yet unknown.

B. PALESTINE.

From "Arutz 7" News, Sunday 03.04.2005: "Jenin and Gaza to be Connected to Railway Despite Disengagement

Israel Railways has announced a 280-million shekel (\$65 million) plan to connect terror centers Jenin and Gaza with the national railways.

Railway officials hope the trains will promote economic growth. Critics of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's disengagement plan, however, suggest that the new train system mean that even after Israel implements a "separation" plan, Israelis and PA Arabs will continue to be intertwined.

The plan calls for an 11-kilometer (6.8-mile) line from Jenin, in northern Samaria, to Afula and the Jezreel Valley. This line will then connect with the planned route from Haifa to Beit She'an. In addition, a 7-kilometer (4.3-mile) link will be built in the area of Gaza, connecting with the planned Be'er Sheva-Ashkelon line.

Both routes aim to link factories with ports in Ashkelon and Haifa.

Rail officials also plan to develop a cargo and passenger terminal at the Erez Crossing, north of Gaza City. They say that the links are necessary to stimulate economic growth in the Palestinian Authority, which they claim will promote peace.

Israel's railway system has grown dramatically in the past five years, making it a more frequent target for terrorist attacks. Three Jews were murdered in a terrorist suicide blast outside the Nahariya train station on Sept. 9, 2001, and in April 2003, a security guard was similarly killed in an attack at the Kfar Saba train station.

Additional long-term Israel Railways projects include trains to the Jordanian border, with links from there to other Arab countries."

C. QATAR.

In the German "Tagesspiegel" 28.02.2005 p.2 is an article by Moritz Döbler about possible future "Transrapid" monorail projects in the Gulf States.

"It was in October 2003, when the the Chairman of Siemens, Heinrich von Pierer sat in the Chancellor's official Airbus and spoke with journalists, that he said it was still far too early to think about a Transrapid line in the Persian Gulf region. The idea was indeed "in the air", but "First we have to get China", he said - then.

Now it is no longer too early. The Federal Chancellor Gerhard Schröder was travelling on Sunday once more in this region, and during the week will visit Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Yemen, Oman and the United Arab Emirates. He will be accompanied by, amongst others, representatives of the Transrapid project team from Siemens and Thyssen-Krupp, as well as DB Chief Hartmut Mehdorn.

Under consideration initially is the construction of a Transrapid line from Qatar, over a sea bridge to the neighbouring Bahrain - a line which could then be extended. The Gulf Cooperation Council is considering a 2,000km. line from Kuwait in the north to Oman in the south. The firm of Dornier is to be commissioned to carry out a study for this line, during the Chancellor's trip. The relevant States are investigating which alignment and which system should be first considered. The project is estimated to cost around \$US 5.7 Billion - two years are envisaged for the planning, then four for the construction.

For the short connection between Bahrain and Qatar a German consortium has already proposed the construction of a Transrapid line. The small state of Qatar is only half the size of Hessen, and could soon be the richest country in the world. As well as Oil, Qatar has reserves of natural gas that should last for at least 150

years. Considering the potential of the Gulf region, the Chancellor's team appears reserved. "The States which are here being considered have plans for a long stretch of line to link their countries. The distances are very great. It has not yet been decided which technology will be employed".

However, from the delegation around the Interior Minister Otto Schily (SPD) one hears that it is indeed planned to sign a statement of intent regarding the Transrapid during the visit. In diplomatic circles one could hear that "the chances for the construction are good". In addition Thyssen-Krupp is planning to open a local office in Qatar.

The Germans 'got' the Transrapid in China. The magnetic train has been gliding over the 30 km. between the international airport of Pudong and the major port city of Shanghai, for

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road. IR is constructing a rapid rail line from Tel Aviv, through the airport and the new city of Modi'in, to Jerusalem, pulling into a planned terminal 300 feet underneath the central bus station. The journey from Tel Aviv will take a mere half hour, and will at last provide a rail connection between the capital and the airport.

Also under construction is an extension that will go down the coastal line south to Ashkelon (along the track that once ran to Alexandria) [sic], and then inland through the development towns of Ofakim, Netivot, and Sderot to Beersheba. Other lines are in the planning stage, including a line from Haifa east to Karmiel and a reincarnation of the Mandate-era 'Valley Train', following a picturesque route through the Jezreel Valley to the Jordan Valley development town of Beit She'an and then on to the Jordan border crossing at the Hussein Bridge. (There's talk of a possible link to Jordan, but no concrete plans.) A line to Eilat is in preliminary planning stages, as it has been for the last 20 years or so.

Coming up the road to Jerusalem, I can make out the massive concrete pylons of the bridge going up to move traffic down into the capital's new ring road, being paved in the valley below and tunnelled through hills. The distances between points 'aleph' and 'bet' in Israel continue to shrink, and with these changes come a changing country. The landscape that flashes by out of the windows of buses and trains and cars is not the one you saw yesterday, and it is not the one you will see tomorrow."

over a year now. It requires only 8 minutes for this journey. An extension of some 160km. to the neighbouring city of Hangzhou - where the World Exhibition will take place in 2010 - is being planned. The government has not yet given the green light for the project, however." (The article continues regarding chances for the Transrapid, opposition in China and its development so far in Germany.)

D. IRAQ.

(i). From 'Rail Passion' No. 81, Mai 2004, p. 88-

"Iraq, the Trains with all the Dangers."

By Clement Martin. (Translation by the Editor based on his schoolboy French and a small pocket dictionary).

"Heavily damaged by the successive conflicts, the Iraqi railways are beginning to function again. But the poor state of the installations and the constant attacks by the Iraqi resistance make all journeys perilous. From the shores of the Persian Gulf in the south, to the Syrian border in the north, our reporter has made a report on the current conditions."

"The Iraqi railways are partially of British origin, notably the line from Bagdad to Basra. The station in Bagdad is a massive edifice constructed by the English. Since the looting in the spring it has been totally emptied of all equipment. A man armed with an AK457 checks all personnel entering the station area. Despite the lamps, a sort of general gloom dominates the premises, but the people are accustomed to this. The telephone doesn't function any more, since the Exchange was bombed. I enter the office of the Public Relations Department, fitted with new tables and an old desk, which proved to be too heavy to be carried off. Two women sit here, covered in their coats, since there is no heating. Their hands rest on the table. They are waiting to have something to do. The head of the department, a man warmly dressed in a fur jacket, tries to look busy behind his desk. He is fascinated by my interest in their railways. He says he has no trouble if I do my project, so long as I head southward in the direction of Basra, where the security situation is better. "For the North, one will have to wait a while" he says, when I mention that region.

The next day, I arrive for the 08.30 at the central station, arriving before the train which isn't yet there. Two Chinese locomotives from Dalian stand in the station. Few Iraqis travel by train

today. The journeys take three times as long as by road, though the prices are one-tenth of the buses. At 08.00, a Co-Co Chinese Dalian loco arrives at the station, and the coaches follow a little later, hauled by a Turkish shunting engine BB DH 9500, from the Tulomas works, brand new. At precisely 08.30 the train hoots and leaves the platform. A large number of wagons, devastated by the looting or the bombing, stand motionless on the other tracks. We pass the locomotive depot. Two Dalian engines are being got ready for service. We branch off to the left. A wide long curve brings the train to a southerly direction and heading towards Basra. At km. 9 the station of Al Mansour is our first stop, but very short, no more than two minutes. We are still in the middle of Baghdad. The motorway to the airport accompanies the line on both sides, between its four lanes. At Dora, at km. 13.25, a southern part of Baghdad, there is a one minute halt, then the train passes the main power generating station which supplies Bagdad with electricity for at least 16 hours a day. The train comprises four passenger carriages, completely ravaged by the looters. The coaches, of French construction, once had air conditioning. The war has ravaged the Iraqi railways. "At the commencement of the wars with Iraq the troubles began; the First Gulf War destroyed some of the 72 Francorail 3,600 hp. locos, the Second War exterminated them totally", M. Faris, the chief of the Baghdad depot told me. The tracks are in a very bad state; the top permitted speed is 70 km/h.

The train passes a palm oasis under which are standing several burned-out lorries and light tanks. The area is very humid and green. At the little station of Al Musayyib, at km. 72.06, are five Hummer vehicles. They drive along the platform, without stopping, on their massive muddy wheels. The train continues, always heading south. Several little stations interrupt the journey. They are all constructed in an identical style, square, in concrete. Some stations have been completely pillaged, and there is nothing left except the walls. At the station of Al Hilla, on the second track, I can see that there had been a collision between two trains. Clearly a head-on collision between two Dalian locos, both entirely wrecked. At the depot in Bagdad M. Faris, the engineer, told me later that the many problems of communications are the cause of a number of accidents, and much stock has been lost as a result. The track is in a deplorable condition and the engine bounces along. At Al Diwaniyya,

km. 184.67, a fairly important station, I make use of the stop, officially for 3 minutes but in fact much longer, to re-join the driver in the Dalian locomotive No. 2750. He invites me to climb in, then sounds the horn to announce the departure. I climb into one of the Chinese locos for the first time. The cab is narrow compared to those of the Alsthom locos for Iran. For locos from 2001, they actually look like they are ten years older. The green paint on the control desk is peeling and revealing a base which is also clearly not very wear-resistant. Nevertheless, everything seems to be functioning. Nothing is superfluous. The Chinese construction is of a very sparse, pure style. We continue tranquilly along the next 80 km. which still await new tracks, jerking at the movement of the rails. At km. 259.00, at the station of Al Huchama, the ballast changes colour, the rails here have already been assembled and relaid and are good - but these are the only decent 30km. of the 536 km. which separate Bagdad from Basra.

Ali, the driver, steps on the gas, the train accelerates rapidly and settles at a speed of 100km/h. A steel bridge on piers links the two banks of the Euphrates. I recall my journey in Syria, where I crossed the same river 1000km. further north, on board one of the new Prima diesels from Alstom. In this very marshy region the line is raised on an embankment. These 30km. of line, constructed by the Indians in 1979, currently end at Samawwa, now the location of the Japanese army barracks, an important station due also to the number of factories which are situated on the edge of the town. Here it is necessary to wait to cross the train to Baghdad. The crossing takes place at Samawwa, at km. 284.440, and the wait is not long. The driver shows me in the distance a very bright light coming from the south. It is now 3 o'clock, time for a meal. The second man prepares the food. Onions, kebab, tomatoes. After a good meal, there is warm tea together with a lot of sugar. As always in the locomotives, the drivers are very friendly and generous. One hand on the controls, the other dipping into the billycan, Faras, a Sunni Moslem, drives us to our next stop, Al Ichidar, km. 312.84. The station is bordered by large palm trees. The atmosphere is very oriental, even though the concrete station hardly matches the atmosphere of the Thousand and One Nights. One minute late, the train moves off, to reach, only 17km. further, Al Daragg, at km. 327.78. We stop for barely a minute, and the same applies at Al Bath, at Km. 345.25. The stations all look very similar to one another, but

the train does not miss out a single one. Al Qouzia, km. 364.00, is a station identical to all the others, concrete, pillars, nothing of any aesthetic worth.

The next station is Nasiriya, an important town in the south of Iraq, where there was resistance during the American advance. In the station, the numerous grain hoppers and tank wagons are holed or ripped by explosives. The driver tells me to return to the passenger coaches. The region between Nasiriya and Basra is not very secure - but where in Iraq is secure? The container trains are looted, by day as well as by night, he says! The zone here is a desert, away from the road. The trains travel at 60 km/h, and are easy to stop. In any case, it is necessary to return, and a man armed with a Kalashnikov mounts guard in my carriage.

At Nasiriya we pause for about ten minutes. The station is at the edge of the town. The petrol tanks are situated alongside the tracks. One of them is totally ripped apart along around 20 metres. "An American missile touched it", an Iraqi in my compartment tries to explain to me.

The night falls, the carriages are not illuminated. Of course - in a country where the electricity supply is in any case uncertain, how could one expect carriages to be lighted? A few battery-powered torches give off a faint glow. The cigarettes betray the presence of passengers, and also the voices; one cannot see anyone but there are conversations being held in all corners, the name "Saddam" crops up constantly in the discussions. I am asked from where I come, and it appears France is well regarded in Iraq. And our national 'Chirac' makes my life easier in this country. The discussion gets carried away, illuminated by the cigarettes. One Iraqi never stops telling me "Ameriqui ali baba" - Americans are thieves. He makes a gesture of shooting and says, "Ameriqui poum poum, Bush ali baba", placing his fingers in front of his mouth and breathing the word 'Petrol'. The guard walks by from time to time and tells him to calm down and says something to the effect that it has nothing to do with me as I am French.

The three hours of the journey by night pass without major incident, apart from one area near a junction, where a train of American Army containers has been attacked. In the darkness of the night, one can distinguish the freight train standing on an avoiding line a few metres from our own. The people are apparently shouting, though in fact they are merely and simply speaking. In the

gloom, reddening flames drive away the shadows. They are the refineries of Sheueba, the most important in Iraq. From one part of the train to the other one hears the ceaseless crackling of the flames.

About an hour later, we enter the station at Basra. No electric current, everything is obscured in the dark. The station has suffered from the looting of the period after the war. The security man from the station stops a car driver, talks to the driver and tells him my destination. I get in, he sets off and we traverse the dark roads of Basra. This city is famous for kidnappings. People pay me a lot of attention. There is no electricity in the whole city. Lamps are grouped around electricity generators along certain streets. My hotel is lit up - it is part of a superior chain.

The next day, I return to the station. I show my papers, signed and stamped, to the guard, to show that I am permitted to take photographs. But there is nothing to photograph here. I wish to go to Umm Qasr. I try to make the people at the Station Master's office understand. A young man armed with an AK47 and carrying a badge "Railway Police" invites me to follow him. We walk along the tracks.

At the other side of the station, in some insignificant administrative buildings, everything has been looted. The Operations Manager speaks a little English. He is ashamed to receive me here. Even the electric cables have been plundered. The American Army has given him a satellite telephone so he can be in contact. Otherwise, between the stations there is a VHF system which functions well, despite the crackling. We make a tour around the Chief's office, and then to the tracks. Authorisation has been obtained. We climb into Dalian loco 2748, and head for the Gulf. The tracks are very poor. The engine is subjected to lateral motions because of the alignment; the rail joints are dipped. All this wonderful infrastructure allows our loco to crawl at 40 km/h. Along our way are a refinery, a petrochemical complex, and lost in the sand some carcasses of damaged engines. To the east, the oil wells seem to advance gently towards the dunes. A train stands immobile on the line, it is unloading rails for the construction of a second track. We halt, Mahmoud descends to see what is going on, he talks with the workers. A blast on the horn, the train reverses for a kilometre until it reaches a junction, the line to the port. Umm Qasr, a quay filled with containers, a few cranes. The American soldiers handle their own con-

tainers. The train is quite clearly the sole means of conveying these containers to different parts of the country. A train is ready to depart for Baghdad at 15.00 - it is necessary for us to return to Basra to clear the line for it. As night falls we traverse the throat of Basra station.

The next day I ride back by car to Nasir. The train from Baghdad should pass here. I choose a position near the bridge, I have patience, I wait. The fishers look exhausted but are working, and suddenly there is a little explosion and this is miraculous fishing, with the aid of a grenade fabricated from a jam tin. At 12 o'clock the train passes, at speed - there is time to immortalise it as it crosses the turquoise waters of the Euphrates.

The return to Baghdad is difficult because of a shortage of fuel, it is necessary to go and manage to find some, to wait several hours at a pump. I return to the Central Station, and see the Director of Public Relations and enquire about a journey to Mosul. No trains after 15.00 hours. For reasons of security, the resistance attacks the trains and the tracks. So nothing doing with Mosul. I ask about going to Hasiba on the Syrian border. "You are foolish, in the Ramadi region it is very dangerous", he replies. "You may go there, but only at your own risk." I ask to visit the depot. This is easy, I take a taxi and go three kilometres back from the station, the passenger carriages stand rotting in their sheds. Some locomotives too. The central depot of Baghdad is the heart of the IRR (Iraq Republican Railways). From this place depart the locomotives for the whole country. Around twenty Chinese locos are present. The Chief Engineer receives me. He is happy to see me, he has already travelled to France, to Belfort, courtesy of Alstom. The French have not been really present on the Iraqi system since the 1980's. There are 72 Francorail locos left, all out of service. There is a scheme for their possible repair. At the moment thirty of the Chinese locos are in working order, out of fifty purchased in 2001. This mortality rate has several causes - the problems of communications between trains, which leads to frontal collisions - for, although this is little known, fog is a major hazard in Iraq - the war, which has led to damage to many locomotives, and the plundering, even now - electric cables, motors, nothing is spared. The resistance commits attacks against the IRR in three sectors - Faludja, west of Baghdad, Samarra, around 150 km. north of the capital, and Alexandria, to the south. The American logistics trains especially bear the brunt of these attacks. It is for this

reason that traffic to the north has been interrupted. Not totally, however, for a train from Turkey arrives once a week in Baghdad. The days are not fixed. When the train arrives at the frontier, the American Army advises the IRR.

Six new Turkish locos are due to arrive at Baghdad. These are the result of old contracts, signed before but delayed by the war, part of the "Oil for Food" programme. Thirty Russian locomotives should likewise be arriving within five months.

In the year 2004, 210 Million Dollars were spent on the tracks, on new lines, and also for the installation of a communications system to link the stations between each other and also to the locomotives. A new line is under construction to link Iran with the south. It requires but 40 kilometres of track to link up Central Asia with Europe. Otherwise, there are projects to link Karbala and Najaf with the system. The Iranian pilgrims would come in large masses to these sites of Sh'ite sanctuaries.

Other ambitious projects foresee the construction of a bypass line around Baghdad, to enable certain trains to avoid the city - for example, those linking Basra with Mosul. A tunnel is also contemplated to place the lines underground through Baghdad, since many major traffic arteries are currently cut by the railway crossings. A line from Basra to Kuwait City awaits merely the day when the Americans put their hands into their pockets. And finally, there are already studies by the English to build a Metro in Baghdad.

The visit to the depot is very fruitful in terms of information. The Engineer, Faris, knows his job well, something which cannot be said to be the case everywhere in the world, especially in the offices where the Baath members of Parliament have been replaced by others who are just as ignorant of the realities of their railway.

The train for Hasiba departs at 10.30 in the morning; I take my ticket, which cost 750 dinars - rather less than half a Euro. The train is formed of four vehicles, the last of which is however reserved for freight. Despite the loud blasts on the loco's horn, the cars do not stop when they see the train. The guard at the barrier, with a red flag draped over him, succeeds in stopping the flow of honking traffic just in time for the train to cross - the last cars giving up only when the train is a mere 15 metres away. They can see that the ratio of forces is not in their favour. The first stop is the station of Kadhimia, km. 9.00. The line heads towards the west, cutting

through an immense interchange at the northern exit from Baghdad. The train does not stop at the first stations, Abu Graiub at km. 18.93, Shailch Dhary, km. 35.46. Then comes Falludja, made famous by the attacks against the Coalition forces. This week, two Frenchmen were shot on the motorway, as well as four Iraqi Christians, working for the Americans, in their minibus - not to mention the various bombs thrown at the Coalition's convoys. An important freight station, the complex at Falludja includes an immense cereals complex formed of spherical silos containing grain. The line, constructed in 1983, is the busiest on the system. The works were built by Indian, Brazilian and Romanian companies. A double track is only serviceable for about a dozen kilometres - the rest has been damaged by bombs or by military vehicles. In my coach, there are hardly more than ten people. A group of men, a family, two individual passengers. The central carriage is busier, the railway's police travel here. The people feel more secure here. Between Habbaniyah and Khalidia a locomotive lies overturned, attacked by the resistance.

At Km. 109.66 the station at Ramadi has been totally pillaged, nothing is left, even a section of the walls has disappeared. The electric cables that run alongside the line are subject to theft, and the wires are missing. A sort of human tornado has swept away everything. It is at the station of Ramadi West, Km. 119.20, that the trains cross. Sometimes it is necessary to wait for up to an hour for the arrival of the other train. Today, both trains are on time, the 'timing' as they both enter the station is perfect. The scenery changes, the little valleys of sand give way to a plain. Also monotonous. The passengers in the centre of the coach come to me to look at me and ask me where I am going. The Iraqis are very curious. They work for the Ministry of Transport, they are customs officials, or better said, new customs officials. Their work will consist of registering the vehicles that enter and leave the country. In the rear coach is a desk and accompanying chairs, and all the forms they will need, accompanying them from Baghdad.

The line passes the banks of the Euphrates on an elevated alignment, at km. 209. The scenery is magnificent, the water turquoise, the desert palms, a real splendid sight. Then the line continues totally straight, crossing desert steppes. The river has also turned to the north, taking with it all signs of life. Around 4.30 we reach our destination. Hasiba, the frontier town with Syria. I am with

my new-found friends, we take their desk and chairs and depart. Everyone stares at me, there are not many non-Arab strangers here, apart from the American soldiers who patrol at night. We go to the town hall, where a room costs 1.5 Euros. It will be cold at night, in this region. The radiator is switched off, there is no current. The armoured cars rumble through the main streets, heading for the frontier posts. The whole hotel shakes as they pass.

Early in the morning, I leave the hotel and return to the station, where the train is due to depart at 08.30. The hall is full, I take my ticket. On the platform, I see the driver, and ask if I can travel in the driver's cab. No problem. I return along my route, travelling in the cab. The driver is a Christian, he is called Louis. He has a copy of the New Testament lying before him. He shows me the first two pages; an American flag is printed prominently on the title page. Then he gives a quick laugh and closes the book. With another blast on its horn, the train heads on for Baghdad."

(ii). In 'Trains' Magazine May 2005 p. 23, Mark W. Hemphill writes that he is about to take up a post with the U.S. State Dept. Iraq Reconstruction Management Office, as Deputy Senior Consultant - Rail, as successor to Gordon Mott and Rick Degman.

E. TURKEY.

(i). ESKISEHIR & ADANA TRAMWAYS.

From 'Today's Railways' 112, p.15. "A new 15km. light rail system with 26 stations for the city of Eskisehir, about 200km. west of Ankara, opened on 24 December 2004 and is surpassing ridership forecasts with an average of 70,000 passengers per day in January. Bombardier Transportation and local partner, civil engineering company Yapi Merkezi, designed, built and commissioned the system while Bombardier supplied 18 32.5m 'Flexibility Outlook' trams. Bombardier is now working on a light rail system for the city of Adana in southern Ankara."

(ii). NEW FUNICULAR IN ISTANBUL.

From 'Today's Railways' No. 113, p.16.

"The group Doppelmayr-Garaventa has recently completed a new funicular in Istanbul. The 500m line is entirely underground and links the port of Kabatas to Taksim (the interchange point for metro, buses and tramway), rising 73m with a maximum gradient of

22%. Two 34.5m trains, each composed of two cars carrying a total of 375 persons (56 seated), will operate at the speed of 10m/second, covering the line in 100 seconds. [Mathematicians will have worked out that this would theoretically allow for a 1000m. line! But obviously starting and slowing down need to be incorporated into the average. WLR.] Large double sliding doors will allow cars to empty and refill in about 60 seconds. Expected traffic is 150,000 passengers per day (7,500 per hour, 20 hours per day). Opening is foreseen before the end of 2005."

(iii). TURKISH RAIL FERRIES.

A query and answer in 'Today's Railways' 113 p.18 reveals the following information.

The port of Derince is situated on the Istanbul Haydarpasa - Izmit - Ankara main line, 84km. east of Haydarpasa, on the sea of Marmora shore in Asia Minor. From here a train ferry operates to Constanta in Romania (though it is not clear whether this supplants or supplements earlier Romania - Turkey routes, Constanta - Istanbul and Constanta - Samsun).

On 29. May 20012 the shipping company Ukrferry commenced a service from the Ukrainian port of Ilyichevsk-Paromnaya, at the end of a 13km. freight-only branch south of Odessa, to Derince. (Other services from Ilyichevsk have served Constanta in Romania, Varna in Bulgaria and Poti in Georgia.) From late September 2004 this was stepped up to four return ferries per month, conveying 1524mm gauge wagons from Ukraine to Turkey. It is not clear whether these wagons are simply unloaded at Derince, the goods being transshipped, or whether they run at all - different standard-gauge bogies and a coupler-adaptor wagon would be necessary - on TCDD tracks.

(iv). GERMANY - TURKEY FREIGHT SERVICE.

It seems the experimental through train we reported on earlier has been considered a success. From 'Today's Railways' 113 p. 42. "Railog, a Stinnes (& DB) subsidiary, started a weekly direct container shuttle service between Halkali (Istanbul) and Duisburg in March 2005. The service runs via Svilengrad (Bulgaria), Ruse (BG) / Giurgiu (Romanina), Curtici (RO) / Lököshaza (Hungary), Hegyeshalom (HU) and Passau. Departure is on Saturday afternoon in both directions with arrival by Friday 06.00. The journey time

of 5 1/2 days presumably leaves time for lengthy customs and other border formalities."

F. ERITREA.

(i). RAILTOUR REPORTS.

From 'C.R.J.'141, p. 342. "During October and November 2004, three enthusiast groups visited Eritrea, one from Germany and two from the UK, the latter two being LCGB and the Railway Touring Company. No major changes have taken place since the 2003 tour..... The same Mallet 0-4-40T's were operational, but the LCGB and RTC tours used only two, 442.54 and 442.59. Except for stock movements, the Mallets were all based at Asmara. Ghinda shed, visited on 8th. November, only contained two of the Breda-built 0-4-0T's, 202.008 and 202.010. At Asmara, 202.004 was booked to work an RTC train uphill the 3km. to km. 115 on 6th. November. It set off from the station yard in fine style hauling one coach, but quickly emptied its boiler of steam and expired near km. 116. With the assistance of gravity, the train backed down the 2km. to the station yard, where the little engine recovered sufficiently to perform some modest demonstration shunting before completing its exhausting day and retiring to the shed! The one change of note has been the repainting of the passenger stock from light blue and white to a rather bright green with lower sections red. Opinions vary as to whether this is an improvement.

It should be noted that the railway expects funding to purchase some 1200/1500hp diesel locomotives and to provide container loading facilities, so the continued chartering of steam trains with total line occupation will then become a thing of the past - The slow schedules and numerous stops for 'blow ups' will make it impossible to run steam trains except over very short sections. The General Manager, Amanuel Gebreselasie, is confident that funds will be made available - of course not predicting when - and in the meantime seems quite unworried that his annual revenue depends solely on a handful of week-long foreign steam charters. When asked about the loading gauge for the transport of containers, he said that a test had been carried out and the loading gauge was sufficient. A bogie wagon with a short container was noted in a siding at Nefasit on 9th. November."

(ii). OCTOBER 2005 RAILTOUR PLANNED.

"Enthusiast Holidays" are running (amongst other things) a tour of Eritrea October 13th.-20th. 2005. The

brochure notes:- "Our tour in November 2002 was the first by any British railway enthusiast tour operator, an outstanding success thanks largely to the warm hospitality and cooperation of the Eritrean Railway Authority; this tour will be our third. The war with Ethiopia - which ended five years ago - meant that there was still a gap of around 24 kms., the most scenic part of the 117 km. line from the capital, Asmara, to the Red Sea port of Massawa. But the line is now complete, and we have chosen October for a tour which will use the lovely Italian 0-4-4-0 Mallets...., the Breda 0-4-0 tanks, and the Fiat 'Littorina' diesel railcar...." It indicates the following planned itinerary:-

"Thurs. Oct. 13th. Flights from UK via Amsterdam and Eritrean Airlines to Asmara, arriving in evening. Overnight in Hotel Ambasoira, Asmara.

Fri. 14th. Oct. Morning return run from Asmara to Arbaroba and return with ca. 1938-built 442 Mallet (hopefully with 'Oriol' rail-lorry available for those who want 'tracking' film or video). In afternoon, 'Littorina' diesel railcar (built 1935) to Arbaroba and on to Nefasit or Ghinda; thence by road to Massawa for dinner and overnight at Red Sea Hotel.

Sat. 15th. Oct. 442 Mallet Massawa - Dogali Viaduct -Mai Atal and return; in afternoon Massawa - Ghinda. Return to Massawa by road.

Sun. 16th. Oct. By road early to Ghinda. 442 Mallet down to Damas, then return uphill through Ghinda and on through the 'new' section to Nefasit (or until daylight fails). Then by road to Asmara for dinner and overnight.

Mon. 17th. Oct. By road to Ghinda; double-headed 442 Mallet to Asmara.

Tues. 18th. Oct. 442 Mallet Asmara - Nefasit and return.

Wed. 19th. Oct. Line-up of all available locos (hopefully including the Krupp diesel and '202' Class 0-4-0T as well as Mallets) and possibly short run towards Arbaroba with '202'. Visit workshops. In afternoon, sightseeing tour around Asmara using vintage Guy Arab double-deck bus. Gala evening dinner before transfer to airport.

Thur. 20th. Oct. Early flight back to Amsterdam and onward connections."

For details, contact < info@entusiasthols.com > or Enthusiast Holidays at 146, Forest Hill Road, London SE23 3QR.

G. JORDAN.

(i). 2004 REPORTS .

From 'C.R.J.' 141, p. 354. "Amman. Jordan can still be regarded as a country providing genuine revenue-earning steam workings, if only on a standby basis. During August 2004, RSH 2-8-2 worked the daily freight service from Amman to Dera'a in Syria for one week, covering for the diesels. The steam fleet in October 2004 was generally as reported (previously in CRJ 139). However, there were also the derelict locos at Libban, on the line south from Amman to Qatana - Nippon Sharyo Pacific 81 and Jung 2-8-2 50 or 52. Considerable quantities of materials and rolling stock were also stored at this station.

Railway Touring Company specials in October 2004 were worked by RSH 2-8-2 23 between Amman and Qatana, Nippon Sharyo 4-6-2 82 from Amman to Dera'a and HStP 2-8-2 71 between Amman and Qasir. Stone-throwing children remained an occupational hazard in the southern suburbs of Amman, though the presence of railway police on all excursion trains kept the problem in check.

Aqaba Railway Corporation. The ARC owns the railway between Aqaba and Batn el Ghul, and leases the section of the Hedjaz Jordan Railway from Batn el Ghul northwards to Menzil. Current schedules show around eight train loads of phosphates a day from the mines to Aqaba. On 4th. October 2004, a 32-wagon train was noted passing Jorf hauled by GE Co-Co DE locos 309 and 410. There is talk of running steam-hauled excursions from Aqaba to Maan, to link with cruise ships calling at Aqaba."

(ii). TEFS TOUR, JUNE 2006.

Although officially 'retired', Bill Alborough continues to 'keep his hand in' with occasional rail enthusiast tours to China, and he writes that he has been asked to do another Hedjaz Tour as well. (TEFS were among the pioneers here, a long time ago now.) So - a tour is planned for Friday May 19th. - Sunday June 4th. 2006.

It is announced as "a mixture of tourism and railways, intended for couples and singles who enjoy the good things in life", and is resurrecting long-standing contacts and friends in Jordan and Syria. A minimum of 16 persons is required to run the tour, and a maximum of 25.

The (edited) initial draft itinerary, as of April 2005, reads:-

Fri 19.05 LHR 17.05, arr. Amman 00.10.

Sat. 20.05. General sightseeing, afternoon to Dead Sea..

Sun. 21.05. Steam train photo-runpasts from Amman to Airport station, ca. 30 miles.

Coach to Karnak, thence to Petra.

Mon. 22.05. Full day at Petra.

Tues. 23.05. To Ma'an station and Wadi Rum. Overnight at Aqaba.

Wed. 24.05. Optional visit to Jordan Potash Railway workshops. Then to Amman.

Thurs. 25.05. Steam photo runpasts to Zerqa. Coach to Jerash. Then to Syria and Bosra.

Fri. 26.05. Bosra Citadel. Steam train runpasts in Yarmuk Gorge.

Sat. 27.05. To Damascus. Visit to Cadem workshops, & city.

Sun. 28.05. Photo runpasts on Serghaya line.

Mon. 29.05. To Lebanon. Baalbek, and possibly Rayak railway workshops.

Overnight in Beirut.

Tues. 30.05. Beirut, cable car, visit to old station.

Wed. 31.05. Flight Beirut - Amman (- London).

Remaining days to be announced. Approximate cost around GBP 2000.

If anyone is interested, contact Bill at T.E.F.S. at 77, Frederick Street, Loughborough, LE11 3TL.

+44-1509 - 262745, fax. 262745.

H. SYRIA.

From 'C.R.J.' 141, p. 354.

"**1.05m. Gauge.** As on the Jordanian section of the Hedjaz Railway, steam traction continues to be used on an occasional basis for normal commercial purposes. According to the station log at Mahaje, some 80km. south of Damascus towards Dera'a, 25 steam-hauled trains worked through the station during September 2004. During the first week of October, Romanian diesel loco AV-401 was noted on these duties, with all operational steam locos participating in a Railway Touring Co. tour. The continuation of steam working (and probably even the railway itself) is down to a small but dedicated group of railwaymen. The restoration of various locos such as the Mallet 0-4-4-2T and of the De Dion Bouton railcar bears testament to their skill and enthusiasm, without which tours such as that of the RTC would be impossible.

RTC Tour. Unlike in Jordan, it was not considered necessary to have any policing on the special trains, the crews being adept at forestalling any potential problems. The following is a summary of the various activities:-

5th. October. After Jung 2-6-0T+T had charged up and down Dera'a station yard, Hartmann 2-8-2 262 worked a special up the branch from Dera'a to Bosra.

6th. October. The return journey from Bosra was scheduled to be double-headed by 262 and Hartmann 2-8-0 91. However, accident damage to the tender of 262 required some hasty remedial work at the shed. During this time, several tour participants were invited into local homes for tea and conversation, exemplifying the general friendliness of the Syrian populace. Once repairs were completed, 91 and 262 topped and tailed the train to Dera'a. Later, 262 and sister loco 260 worked an afternoon top and tail tender-first excursion to Mezerib, some 12 km. down the line from Dera'a towards Haifa.

7th. October. 260 worked a train down the former Haifa line through the Yarmuk Gorge to Zeizoun. This excursion was also not without incident, as 260 was pronounced a failure at Zeizoun, being incapable of lifting the two-coach train back up the Gorge. Many visiting enthusiasts will recall the now-retired German-speaking shed master from Dera'a. He had travelled on the train and was able to explain the finer points of a blown superheater element. No. 91 then performed the 'Thunderbird' role, trundling down from Dera'a to haul the stricken 260 and its train back up the Gorge as an unplanned double-header, which still managed various photo-stops en route. In the evening, Borsig 2-8-0 160 was rostered to take the train from Dera'a to Damascus, with 91 coupled at the rear. The scheduled Ganz railcar service to Damascus was cancelled, with the steam working becoming a service train for the few normal fare-paying passengers. They and the handful of enthusiasts choosing to travel to Damascus by train were in for a long night. Finally equipped with a working headlamp at 19.50, 160 laboured from the outset, with much clanking and wheezing. It struggled as far as Mahaje, before being declared a failure around 22.00. 'Thunderbird Two', in the form of diesel AV-401, had been summoned from Cadem, and appeared out of the night at 00.30. En route, 160 was unceremoniously dumped at Mesmie and the train, still with 91 at the rear, crept into Cadem at 04.30!

8th. October. Because of the engineering works..... Serghaya branch trains were starting from the rather uninspiring station at Hame, about 10km.

from Kanawat. An excursion from here to Ain Fijeh was powered by Hartmann 2-8-0 90. The line on to Serghaya remained blocked. SLM 2-6-0T's 751/754/755 were in the yard at Hame, with 755 at least in running order.

9th. October. Crews had branded 91 as a relative weakling at the start of the tour, but by the end it had become the star performer. The final trip down the Hedjaz main line saw 91 and Hartmann Mallet 0-4-4-2T 962 double-head the train to Kiswe, 21 km. from Cadem. No. 91 then ran on ahead, leaving 962 to rattle through the desert in sole command. At Mesmie (50 km.) the stricken 160 sat forlornly in the station awaiting a tow back to Cadem, whilst 962 handed over the 91 for the remainder of the journey south to Dera'a (123km.)

Cadem Works. The magnificent De Dion Bouton railcar ACM3 was coaxed into action for the RTC party by the one driver who seems to be capable of making it function. Described by our reporter as 'a candidate for one of the eight wonders of the railway world', the railcar, which still retains internal notices in French, duly ran trips up and down the Works yard. With reference to the list, cited from CRJ 139, of locos residing in the undergrowth, Borsig 161 was not identified, in fact it is thought that 161 is the 2-8-0 in grey primer stored beside the shed at Dera'a, intended as a long-term renovation project. Abandoned locos not recorded in CRJ 139 were Hartmann 2-8-0 93, a possible Borsig 2-8-0, and a couple of stacked frames from 2-8-0's or 2-8-2's. Also present in the Works were Ganz railcars R-502/503, Schöma diesel shunters 22346/2247, and Roumanian-built diesel locos A-301 operational, AV-400 derelict and cannibalised, and AV-402 under repair."

J. IRAN.

DIESEL LOCOS FROM GERMANY.

According to reports in the German railway press, ('Eisenbahn Kurier' 5/2005, 'Eisenbahn Journal' 5/2205 p.39), DB has sold several withdrawn Class 218 diesel locomotives to Iran. On 10.03.2005 218.009 hauled thirteen sister locomotives from Oberhausen-Osterfeld to the Bremen DB works where these engines are maintained. At least ten, and maybe all thirteen are destined for export to Iran. Locomotives concerned are: 218.012, 218.114, 218.116, 218.129, 218.133, 218.134, 218.135, 218.143, 218.145, 218.146, 218.148, 218.149, 218.150.

K. EGYPT.

GERMAN IMPORT FAILED.

A note in 'Today's Railways' 113 indicates that DB was in (fruitless) discussion with Egyptian State Railways as well as with Iran for possible sale of the 19 'Class 605' four-car tilting ICE dmu's. 69:09.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

(a). VALLEY LINE THEFTS.

More on the tale of stolen railway tracks came in an article entitled "Thieves Steal Historic Railway Track" By Lydia Aisenberg, in the Manchester 'Jewish Telegraph' of 18.03.2005:-

"Remnants of a historical railway track running through the Beit Shean and Jezreel valleys are being ripped up by iron thieves on a fast track to a quick profit.

Here 'mind the gap' signs would not be referring to the space between platform and train but to the long distances between portions of the track! Police and volunteer Israeli railway buffs now have to patrol remaining portions of track and dilapidated station buildings of the once-impressive railroad from Damascus to Haifa. Their aim is to prevent even more track ending up in iron foundries. Three times in the last few weeks thieves have been caught with their heavy load of stolen goods, uprooted from different parts of the track.

Railway officials are more than concerned at the rising tide of thefts from the Afula, Beit Shean and Tzemach areas, but as the track runs through mostly open spaces there is little they can do in the way of protection.

The line, which was opened in 1904, ran from Haifa through the Jezreel, Beit Shean and Jordan valleys, before joining up with the Hejaz Damascus line. In its heyday the Hejaz Railway saw trains steaming 800 miles from Syria through Jordan to Saudi Arabia. Trains from Damascus to Haifa operated through Palestine until the outbreak of the 1948 War of Independence. Elderly members of my Jezreel

Valley kibbutz have many stories about the days when the train passed by as they drained the swamps. The trains stopped at Afula and went on through the middle of the wide, open valley.

Kibbutzniks working in the fields would walk alongside the huffing, puffing iron horse and chat with the passengers as the train passed through. This way they could keep up with news of events in the neighbouring valley and pass their own on further down the line.

"It was a sort of births, marriages and deaths announcement system on wheels", one of the nostalgic older folk told me. Over the last 10 years or so, a number of organisations and the railway buffs have restored stone buildings at Kiryat Haroshet station near Tivon - a short distance from Haifa - and developed a park area a few kilometres long.

Here the thieves have left well alone. After all, the restored area is close to private homes, unlike at the much larger renovated station houses at Kfar Yehoshua, where thieves actually sawed the wheels off the axles of restored carriages. Some of those wheels were found in a heap of iron and metal awaiting meltdown at an ironworks near Akko."

[Ed. adds - Though we do not condone the theft and destruction of restored rolling stock, we cannot help but comment that many of these sections of rails and sleepers have been lying, totally abandoned and derelict, for over sixty years now.... and some sections had been taken by farmers decades ago and used as fencing.]

Paul adds:- Re 68:3:2. "Among the hardware stolen over the last year or so were two old HR bogies belonging to the IRM. These had been clearly marked with paint at Qishon Works as reserved for the museum, but somehow were diverted to Kfar Yehoshua station instead where the HR buildings have been renovated and a visitors' centre established. (Investigations have failed to discover exactly how or why this happened). Repeated requests to the proprietors at Kfar Yehoshua for return of the bogies received no positive response and, having been left in the open for anyone to see, were eventually stolen from there. Police enquiries were made and the bogies found at Qiryat Plada steelworks but, by then, they had been cut into little pieces and were unsalvageable. These were the last two known narrow gauge bogies left in Israel and had been intended to go under the HR saloon coach, presently still in use as a synagogue at Qishon Works, when that vehicle finally comes to the

museum. This means that there are now no suitable replacement bogies other than, presumably, in Jordan or Syria. If anyone knows differently then the museum will be pleased to hear."

(b). IDEAS AND OBSERVATIONS.

Frank Adam writes:- "I gather by 2008 we shall see double track Nahariya to Ashkelon, and Tel Aviv to Jerusalem both via Lod and Beth Shemesh, and via the Airport and Modi'in. Also Lod - Beersheba - Dimona and at least single track Ashkelon - Ofakim - Beersheba, as well as Haifa - Bet Shean if not Irbid.

This leaves some interesting gaps. Given that the Ashdod line already crosses into the Gaza Strip and is only 3.5 km. short of Gaza Town; given both Condoleeza Rice of the USA and Bendetta Ferraro-Waldner of the EU have just offered the PA \$500 Million in aid; why do we, and all in the area, not ask that some \$100M of it go into re-tracking to Rafah and re-tracking the Tulkarm - Nablus - Jenin 'fork' and the connections to the Rosh haAyin - Binyamina line, via Qalqilya and Tulkarm? Then 'sealed' trains (dmu's) could run Rafah to Nablus and Jenin (splitting and rejoining in Tulkarm). The total length of line involved is about 100km., and there is enough spare labour about to do it by hand in three months even with picks and shovels! The PA could then at least have some social continuity.

Second, why not re-track and refurbish the links to Shlomi and Jenin-Afula or put planning permission embargoes/reservations on the route so that Jordan or Lebanon can have through traffic as soon as Lebanon consents - and this will also allow Samaria Arabs and at a distance the Gaza Arabs another 'safety valve'.

Could we now envisage after 2008 a possible line northwards from Beit Shean to Tiberias (a new station, probably in tunnel west of the lakeside) and then to Safad before looping west to Karmiel and Nahariya, with a spur to Safed bus station and Hazor looping through a Mt. Canaan tunnel?

(c). ESSLINGEN 0-6-0D's.

In 'Bahn Extra' 2/2005, p. 58, in an article about the rebirth of the German railway production industry following World War 2, is a photo of three 0-6-0D's for IR at the Esslingen works in 1956 - Nos. 215, 214 and one presumes 213. Photo by B. Kaiser, from the collection of G.H. Köhler.

It is noted in the text that post-war, Esslingen built diesel-hydraulic locos and diesel railcars for, amongst other countries, Israel and Turkey, and steam locos for Iraq.

(d). Re. 68:1. CORRECTION.

The cover photo of issue 68 was erroneously credited to Evyatar Reiter - Evyatar provided indeed the smaller picture on the left, and many others (for which we are grateful!) - but that of the future tram - which appeared also, smaller, in its rightful place - was sent to us by Aharon Gazit.

(e). Re. 68:6:(a) and 68:6:(e). SYRIA OTTOMAN RLY.

The correct title for the unsuccessful precursor to the Haifa branch of the Hedjaz Railway is the "Syria Ottoman Railway" and not "Syrian" as shown. This is as per a few surviving company documents at the IRM

(f). JAFFA STATION.

Frank Adam noted:-

"I am interested in the clean-up of Jaffa Station (Harak. 66 p.3.) What is to happen to the 'Bet HaOsef', the Ordnance Corps Museum of old artillery and small arms? I visited in the 1990's and realised pretty quickly from the triangular mild steel roof trusses that I was in fact in the old Jaffa freight yard, back to back with the station."

Paul writes: Re 68:6:(j). March 2005 I was shown detailed plans for the renovation of Jaffa station and other historical buildings in the locality which are to be restored as part of a leisure and commercial complex in a fairly run-down area of Tel Aviv. Work on this project is due to start later in 2005.

(g). 1933 CLOSURES.

Trawling through the Palestine Post archives for 1933, I find the following.

A large number of passenger halts were to be "suspended" from 1st July, 1933. A notice from Palestine Railways lists them all.

But the most surprising thing I have found is this:

"It is learned (states our Jaffa correspondent) that the service of electric coaches between Lydda and Gaza will cease from tomorrow [1.7.1933]. This service was introduced in 1929 for the purpose of competing with the road traffic. The venture has proved to be unprofitable."

There is no doubt that rail transport is referred to because it is the tail

end of an article about the speeded-up train service thanks to the closure of all those passenger halts.

The writer of this piece of nonsense set the scene for all the later gibberish written about railways in the Palestine/Jerusalem Post!

Paul's comment:

"Well now, this is a new one on me!! It smacks of garbled journalese, but certainly cannot be dismissed out of hand. The inference is definitely rail transport, but there weren't any electric trains. My first reaction (knee-jerk) is that said scribe was really referring to the Sentinel-Cammell STEAM railcars. These would have entered traffic in 1929, and Lydda-Gaza is thought to have been one of the services operated. Evidently it didn't pan out too well. Later in the 1930's they were used Gaza-Khan Yunis for a time. Early suburban workings perhaps?"

A list of the passenger halts to be discontinued:

1. Bat Galim
2. Kafr Samir
3. Neuhardtshof
4. Et Tira
5. Harbour Works (Atlit Sidings)
6. Kafr Lam
7. Tantura
8. Pardess Hana
9. Khirbat el Jamala
10. Qaqun
11. Et Taiyaba
12. Km 75.945
13. Qalqilya Village
14. Magdiel
15. Rantiya
16. Wilhelma
17. Kafr Jinis
18. Lydda Village

19. Bralley
20. El Qubeiba
21. Sukreir
22. Hamama
23. El Jiya
24. Barbara
25. Beit Jirja
26. Beit Hanun
27. Jabalya
28. Mikve Yisrael
29. Yazur
30. Beit Dajan
31. Qishon
32. Sabina
33. Nesher
34. Kfar Hassidim
35. Jenin Road
36. Umm ez Zinat
37. El Mujeidal Road
38. Merhavya
39. Zirin
40. Menahemiya

"All locations are found on a 1934 map except Nos. 19 (Bralley? Such an un-Hebrew and un-Arabic name), 32 and 36. My guess is that - as they are listed more or less geographically, for example north to south in order on the main line - that Sabina is somewhere in the Haifa area and Umm ez Zinat probably around Jenin. I assume Jenin Road is on the Afula-Jenin branch just south of Afula where the railway crosses a road.

Of course there is no way of knowing whether any of these names are the same location as present-day stations, such as Qishon."

(h). PERSONALIA.

We congratulate our reader Prof. Jacob Landau of the Hebrew University

for being awarded the Israel Prize in Oriental Studies! On a sadder note, Hans Kohut faces further and long-term health problems with his Parkinsons and we wish him strength in facing them - he writes that he looks forward to reading many further issues!

David Kushner, referred to in 68: , is of course a Professor in the Dept. of Middle East History at the University of Haifa, an Ottomanist by training, who has written on Turkish nationalism. Apparently he is on Sabbatical at Harvard until September 2005.

(i). HISTORICAL EXHIBITION IN JERUSALEM.

Paul writes:- "This exhibition in David's Tower, just inside Jaffa Gate of the Old City of Jerusalem, was mentioned in 68:6:f when it was still in the early stages of construction. The official opening was on 20/4/05 and, since I'd received an invite, went along to see how it had turned out, and also to take a first train ride up to Jerusalem since the line reopened the week before. All trains are IC3 worked, and my evening departure from Tel Aviv (two IC3 sets mercifully with the windows unobscured by stick-on advertising) left with all seats taken. Two things struck me. First, there were some trackside scars and piles of rubble remaining among the mountains, and places where sprayed-on concrete (grouting?) had been applied as embankment walls. These are unsightly, but I've no doubt a couple of winters will see them disappear under vegetation. Secondly, I could detect no appreciable (if any) increase in train speed from what I recall before the line closed in 1998.

I enjoyed the exhibition. There was an excellently presented array of large photos depicting the line through the years, and also clips from old films that were mostly new to me. Shimon Futterman had worked long and hard on a large model layout (HO I think), with several trains whizzing round at once. Out in the open were two long layouts (of much larger gauge - S perhaps?) which ran through and round and above pathways between ancient city stones just inside the entrance, and again featuring several trains in action all travelling at slow enough speeds to appreciate them properly. The exhibition catalogue (40 Shekels) was professionally done too. Definitely recommended for a family outing. The exhibition will remain open until after the High Holy Days of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur in October.

My midday IC3 back a couple of days later was about three-quarters full. If I'd left it till the next week of Pessach

(Passover) I'd have been lucky to even squeeze aboard. The holiday trains were jam-packed solid with folk left behind on platforms and vociferous complaints being aired in newspapers and on radio and TV. Not pleasant, and not a good advertisement for IR."

(j). And here is another view of the new (reopened) line:-

"FROM JERUSALEM TO BEIT SHEMESH".

From the "Allgemeine Jüdische Wochenzeitung" 19.05.2005. p. 4. "A Good Train!" (or: "A Good Pull" - this is a pun in German). By Vladimir Struminski.

(This typically-journalistic report is given here in translation because it shows how a non-enthusiast with family and car might view the service on offer - and makes some interesting observations about the signposting and information available. Ed.)

"Jerusalem has a rail connection again. And a sparkling new station as well. After a forced break of seven years - the line was closed in 1998 due to poor condition - the train winds its way once more from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv.

We didn't want to go quite so far. The line, first opened in 1892 by the Ottomans, is indeed a little faster now, but nevertheless an hour and a half for the whole line seemed to us to be a bit too long. So we satisfied ourselves with a short trip to Beit Shemesh. This provincial little nest near Jerusalem can be reached from Jerusalem in 40 minutes at a speed of 45 km/h.

So the kids, who were excited at the prospect of this adventure, were loaded into the car and off we went to the station. After 20 minutes Jerusalem's biggest shopping mall at Malkha was reached. But where is the station? Four years of planning and preparation time had apparently not been enough to organise some direction signs. Then, however, we noticed a sign hanging from one of the lamp-posts - "To the station opening". No-one had got around to removing it in the five weeks or so since the actual ceremony. We followed the arrow, asked the way and finally came to the station.

The security personnel at the entrance smiled, the escalator functioned, and the station entrance hall, laughably tiny for a city of 700,000 was overfull. On this school-free day it seemed that many other families also wanted to experience the Age of the Train.

A half hour before the departure time, everyone suddenly got the same idea, to go down to the platform and

make sure of a seat. The loudspeaker announcements informing us that the train should not be entered until the security check had been completed could not be heard above the hubbub. Stupidly, the doors are all open. The few railway employees present can only prevent entry to the train through hard physical efforts. The crowd of people huddled at each carriage doorway gets thicker and larger and more aggressive as each minute passes. With the cry "Stop pushing me!" a mother with three kids overtakes me from the right and rams her elbow into my stomach.

Fortunately at this moment the guards at the doorways step aside. We storm into the train, a scout is sent to run ahead to grab four places together. With a feeling of success we settle down and watch those less fortunate hunt for places for themselves and their families. Then the train sets off, direction westwards. The landscape with the wooded mountains of Judea passes the window. The crowd of children call out excitedly at each new wonder - "A horse! A horse!", "A donkey, look, there, a donkey!" At the next table a meal is unpacked which, for sheer quantity, would ensure that no-one went hungry on the Trans-Siberian Railway. By the time our neighbours have finished off their cold chicken legs, the train is entering the station at Beit Shemesh and it is time to leave, exiting on the right.

In the station subway we are canonized into by an attack formation comprising a Father, Mother and several smaller types, and are almost knocked to the floor. By the time we recover ourselves to complain, the miscreants have already vanished. But as we climb the steps, we see that the train had set off in just front of their noses. A station worker, who had witnessed the scene, grins at us sympathetically and remarks "Serves them right. Now they have a whole hour in which to relax."

There has been human civilisation in Beit Shemesh for thousands of years already, but in the area around the station there is no evidence of any of this - unless you count a shopping centre. Nevertheless, there is a McDonalds in which we can pass the time till the train back is due. In order not to be too late, we get to the platform a quarter hour before departure time and check with fellow travellers that we are on the right platform. Here, as in Jerusalem, there are no destination screens. Five minutes after the planned departure time a loudspeaker informs us there will be a ten-minute delay, which stretches to a quarter hour before the train comes. Shortly before Jerusalem we

have to pause and wait for another train to pass from the single-track section. In this way the short stretch from Beit Shemesh to Jerusalem builds up to a half-hour delay.

Packed closely with our fellow travellers we fight our way to the exits. Here, each person has to pass two obstacles - the platform barrier which can only be passed with a ticket, and a revolving door, which leads to the open air. Hopefully that will never get stuck in an emergency. However, we are unscathed. Three and a half hours after we had arrived at the station, we leave it and go to the car. What an experience! A unique one, a one-off - in the truest sense of the word."

(k). BENNIE RAILPLANE SCHEMES.

A book review in 'Backtrack' Vol. 19 No. 6 June 2005 p.381 on "The Bennie Railplane" by William Black refers to this unsuccessful overhead monorail scheme using propeller-driven cars - a short prototype was built near Milngavie near Glasgow in 1929 and was finally demolished in 1958. According to this, George Bennie attempted to interest various places in building a full system, including Tel Aviv and Baghdad! Does anyone know more?

(l). E.S.R. KIOSK LOCOS.

The two enchanting little "kiosk" tank engines on Egyptian State Railways were noted and illustrated in issues 50 and 52. Another photo of one of them can be found in the book *Jules Verne's Express* by Werner Sölch (Alba Buchverlag, Düsseldorf). The book is sub-titled *Die legendäre Indian-Mail-Route nach Sudostasien* which succinctly describes its contents. For many years, Werner has been an inveterate international rail traveller, reaching parts that not many other people ventured to some thirty or forty years ago. Several books resulted from his journeyings, all published by Alba. Werner has most generously donated three of these to the library at the IRM. In addition to the above mentioned book, these are *Expresszüge im Vorderen Orient* and *Orient Express*.

(m). KATINKE - TWO ANCIENT CORRECTIONS by Paul Cotterell.

(i) "In 59:11, page 18, I stated that I was not convinced about the "short branch shown curving round westwards to end up by the letters W1" in the map on page 15. I have been rereading some of the extracts from Katinke's memoirs, and among those in 24:11, page 21, is a passage which appears to confirm the existence of this branch. Katinke wrote of..."a kilometre-long extension along the west bank of the wadi", and this accords with the map details in 59:11. The notation W1 on the map evidently refers to a well, and other such wells around Beersheba are also marked.

(ii) In translations from Katinke that appeared in early issues of *Harakevet* I used the word 'technical' (eg. 'technical department'), this being a literal translation of the word Katinke used. In fact, I have no doubt that Katinke really meant 'mechanical', and this is the term I used in later translations of the extracts. I trust present and future researchers will not draw wrong conclusions from those earlier mistranslations."

69:10

FROM THEN TILL NOW (PART 17):

Noted in reading by Paul Cotterell from Baruch Katinke's book 'Me'az v'ad Hena'; see earlier installments in 11:22, 13:17, 16:15, 19:19, 20:15, 24:11, 30:21, 38:15, 46:12, 59:15, 61:9, 63:11, 64:9, 66:13 and 68:13. This is the chapter entitled 'The Bankers Wanted to Rob the Safe' on pp. 219-220 of that book.

The whole area, though theoretically in Turkish hands, was full of Beduin who were supported by the English. Prominent at their head was Feisal, son of Hussein the Hashemi from Mecca, who was later king of Iraq. Every day there were attacks on the railway line and the trains, bridges and culverts were destroyed, and a journey was entirely one of obstacles and stoppages. At the same time, while in Damascus and in all The Land of Israel there was a serious shortage of foodstuffs, the markets of Arabia overflowed with everything good that had been smuggled from Egypt and Jeddah. The merchants of Damascus began to visit our locality frequently, bought up everything within reach and sent it to Damascus where they sold their merchandise at a large profit. In order to transport their goods by train to Damascus the merchants co-opted group leaders [sic - doubtless railway officers and foremen etc] as accomplices in their trade, and succeeded in moving their

freight by military train to The Land of Israel, Syria and Iraq. The law forbade the transport of private goods by rail, but in Turkey the law was given different meanings with the help of baksheesh. I would receive letters of recommendation from high ranking army officers to let the merchants have 3 or 4 wagons to transport their merchandise to Damascus, on the pretext that it was intended for schools or public need. As the only Jew in a sea of Turks and Arabs I could not ignore these letters, even though I knew that the recommending officers got very handsome payments for their letters.

Meanwhile, the payment of wages to the railwaymen began to arrive late, by up to two months and more. Great, then, was the rejoicing when the paymaster finally arrived from Damascus, a large, strong, iron cash box alongside him in his special coach. It had taken him over two months to travel from Damascus to Ma'an, as each day the railway line was shattered in a different spot. After they had paid us, the paymaster and his assistant were to continue to Medina and pay the railwaymen there. At that time the Beduin had blown up a bridge not far from Ma'an and the pair were unable to continue. So the paymaster and his full cash box remained in Ma'an for a whole week. Eventually the bridge was repaired and it was decided that they would leave next day. That same night the Beduin blew up another bridge, thirty kilometers from us, and the traffic was halted again.

One day, towards evening, the paymaster and his assistant appeared at my place and announced that they were fed up with waiting for the line to be cleared into the Arabian Peninsula and intended returning to Damascus with the safe. I suspected that they meant to steal [lit. to net] all the money in the cash box, to hide in one of the stations along the way, and await the arrival of the English which everyone was prophesying would be very soon. I told them that I could not object to their returning to Damascus, but that they would have to hand over the safe and everything in it to military custody before they left, so that we could pay the workers their wages when the line was reopened. They argued long and hard and demanded that the cash box be returned with them to Damascus, saying that they were made responsible for it by their masters. I stood my ground and told them that next morning I would ask the army command to requisition the safe and that they be given a receipt for the money in it. The paymaster and his assistant parted from me in anger.

The night was hot, and when I went to the officers mess, at a distance of about half a kilometer from the station, I left my jacket and pistol in my room. Suddenly, two persons fell upon me in the darkness and began choking me. It was the paymaster and his assistant who had decided to get rid of me lest I foil their plot. Without a weapon in my hand I began to kick and head-butt them, and with an almighty effort I managed to get away from them and shout for help. One of them struck me on the head with a stick. The stick broke. With the broken end of the stick he jabbed me in the face. The stick was bamboo and the broken end was as sharp as a hundred pins. My face was covered with blood.

Happily for me my cries were heard. The steps of approaching people were heard in the dark. The paymaster and his assistant ran off and I was taken to the first-aid room where the splinters were removed from my face and I was bandaged. That same night the two were apprehended by the military and the next day they were sentenced to death by court martial, and the safe passed to the army command.

69:11.

THE FATE OF THE WAGONS-LITS COACHES ON ISRAEL RAILWAYS.

As is well known, once the 'fogs of war' had settled in 1948 (if indeed they ever did), two former vehicles of the Wagons-Lits Compagnie were still standing on Israel Railways tracks. Paul Cotterell has found several documents in File 62-Gimmel "The International Sleeping Car Co." relating to these coaches which cast an interesting light on the technical and diplomatic finesse required to resolve this issue.

1. On 15th. Dec. 1949 the "Directeur de l'Exploitation Générale" at 40, Rue de l'Arcade, Paris, wrote to M. Fisher, "Ministre de l'Etat d'Israel", who was then based at 143, Ave. Wagram, Paris. he drew tactful attention to the fact that after the "recent incidents" in the Middle East, his Company appeared to have mislaid two coaches from the former Egypt - Israel (sic!) service - Wagon-Restaurant 2531 and Wagons-Lits 1774, the latter of which was known to have suffered damage. He asked for any information or for contact with a "competent Authority" in Israel who could provide any. He added some outline dimensions to assist in the search - WR 2531 had 40 places, was built of teak planking, by Ringhoffer, metal chassis, 14m. between bogies, bogie type U; 7 compartments (? - Boites), and a stove. WL 1774 had the same length and construction, had 16 places, was on a 'mixte' chassis and had been built by Klett.

[Note: Cotterell "Railways of Palestine & Israel" p.138 Appendix B Table 1 lists 1774 as a sleeper built by MAN in

69:12

THE YARMUK

Note. [HR xx] in the article below are relevant page references in Rock Tourret's book 'Hedjaz Railway'.

The Hedjaz Railway has fascinated me ever since I first visited it with Rick Tourret and others in May 1979. This fascination is a combination of several factors that include its history, the fact that so much of it and its rolling stock is still virtually in its original condition and the variety of its landscape - from arid open desert, through lush agricultural areas and the urban suburbs of Damascus and Amman, to the impressive Barada Gorge on the Serghaya line and the remains of the Haifa line through the Yarmuk Valley.

The Yarmuk line is particularly interesting and I hope to be able to visit it again in the foreseeable future. Its very survival is incredible as it was cut when the second Yarmuk bridge was blown up on the night of 16/17 June 1946 [HR 106/109] and it has never been repaired. Although trains between the Palestine border and Dera'a resumed after the attack, by 1949 they had been reduced to one a week [HR 154] and regular services ceased some time after that. In 1979 we were fortunate in being able to go down the Yarmuk valley from Dera'a as far as Esh Shejara although photography was not allowed beyond Makaren. Since then, I have not heard of any trains going beyond Zeizun. In 1983 we were only able to go to Zeizun. By 1997 it was only

1908; 2531 is not listed, but Restaurant 2351 - possibly the same vehicle - by Ringhoffer of 1912. 2302 and 2346 of the same series are also noted.]

2. On 8th. January 1950 Thos. Cook & Son at their Haifa branch, (18 Carmel Ave.) clearly acting here as intermediaries for their "associated company", wrote to IR's General Manager enquiring whether any of a long list (in duplicate) of spare parts were still in existence at Haifa, and if so requesting "a letter confirming that these spares are the property of Messrs. Wagons-Lits and are still at their disposal at Haifa". The list includes a multitude of minor items of suspension and brake components.

3. No responses are filed. On 21st. July 1950 the WL tried again, this time through their Turkish office - the "Türkiye Diviziyon of the Kompani Enternasyonal" at Istanbul. The Representative here, Husnu Durukal, wrote to "Monsieur Baikovitz" (sic - for Paicovitch) requesting his assistance in contacting the Minister for Communications with a view to drawing up a contract to dispose of said vehicles to the State of Israel, and ending with a personal flourish of pleasure at the fond memory of meeting his correspondent at the last International Timetable Conference at Istanbul in 1947.

4. The reply to this letter, typed in French and signed by M. Paicovitch, is dated 21st. August 1950. After pleasantries he notes with regret that both vehicles were severely damaged by acts of sabotage in the period leading up to Israel's establishment and were therefore out of service, in such a poor condition that IR had no desire or intention of acquiring them. ("Je me permets de vous rappeler les actes de violents sabotages qui ont sévi notre pays et les dites voitures ont en également souffertes. En effet, l'état de ces voitures est tel qu'elles sont hors de service, de sorte qu'il ne peut être question pour notre Administration d'en faire l'acquisition, et d'autre part, vu leur condition il est impossible de les remorquer afin de les restituer.") In the circumstances he recommended that the most sensible course of action would be simply to write them off on their lists.

Copies were sent to the Legal Department of the Ministry of Communications, to the Ministry and the Minister separately (!) and to the Chief Mechanical Engineer.

LINE

possible to go down the line to the top of the gorge above the last tunnel (tunnel 7) owing to major landslides at the head of the valley that included one that almost completely blocked the bottom end of tunnel 7, another just beyond at the far side of the curved viaduct (bridge 15) immediately below the tunnel, and a number of others along the far side of the valley before the large steel viaduct (bridge 14).

As there had been only been irregular traffic down the line since 1946, the likelihood of the landslides being cleared appeared to be very remote. However, by 2000 the line had been cleared and since then trains have occasionally run down to Zeizun.

It is one of my major regrets that Ron Garraway died in 1972 and that when I knew him I did not know of the Hedjaz. It was many years later that his son, Allan Garraway, showed me his father's letter describing his journey up the Yarmuk valley on 2 September 1919. It was even later, after I had transcribed it, that I discovered that it had been published in Harakevet No 7 in March 1990. Ron's description of his journey from Haifa to Dera'a is vivid and over the section that remains today is still accurate with the sudden contrast between the excitement of the gorge and the boredom of the final 16 km across the flat plain from Tel esh Shehab to Dera'a. The contrast is even more stark in the opposite direction when one leaves the plain through the cutting at Tel esh Shehab and suddenly comes out at the head of the gorge and the views only get better. Even the stock on the train may be the same with one of the Borsig 2-8-0s at its head. This can be seen from the photo on the front page of Issue 7 and more clearly on page 8 of Allan's book *Garraway* –

5. The Paris office wrote once more, on 16th. September 1950, to M. Paicovitch direct this time, as "Monsieur le Directeur Général", thanking him for the information which had been transmitted via the Turkish office. He announced that they were renouncing further involvement in this project which had, at least, enabled them to make contact with Israel Railways. Should M. Paicovitch be attending the next Timetable Conference in Amsterdam on the following month, he would be very pleased to meet, to assist, etc. etc.

And that seems to be that. Clearly it was not worth the trouble and effort dismantling the remaining wrecks for spares, these vehicles were in any case hardly of the most modern design, and one presumes the CIWL as a company operating through several countries had been insured. I do not think that Mr. Paicovitch attended the Amsterdam conference - Israel was in any case still isolated from neighbouring systems, and despite various proposals remains so to this day. But at least one further 'loose end' of the late Palestine Railways was neatly tidied up.

Father and Son which shows that the loco on his train was one of the five Borsigs, 160 to 164.

Many readers may not have seen his description of the journey as it is some fifteen years since Issue 7 was published. Consequently, it may be worth reprinting the following extract that starts in Haifa:

We had a stroll through the Loco Shops and had a look at the Turkish engines etc. There are a wonderful collection of engines there, and nearly all new modern ones. There is a tablet at Haifa commemorating the completion of the railway and it appears that Johnnie Turk had only just completed his wonderful railway, and stocked it with some of the finest engines procurable when war broke out and he had it all very rudely taken away from him!! One must certainly give him credit for the construction of his railways to the 3' - 6" gauge,

as they are the finest and most wonderful I have ever seen, but there! I am describing them before the journey! ...

The train left Haifa at 11 o'clock. It consisted of 7 bogie corridor coaches, with entrances at either end by steps and platforms similar to the American style. The

seats were wooden and would have been decidedly hard had it not been for the wonderful scenery and continual chasing from side to side of the carriage. Afule really marks the beginning of one of the most wonderful and thrilling railway journeys one could possibly wish for, as within about ½ an hour one begins the descent into the Jordan Valley. The incline down is not steep, but gradual, and the

curves are such that for about 5 hours of continuous travel there is not a train's length of straight line. ... Shortly after leaving Samak one crossed the Jordan on a high steel girder bridge, the river rushing in torrents along a rocky bed full of boulders. Very soon one crosses the river again on a wooden bridge. The original steel one was blown up by Johnie Turk, and the boys have temporarily erected a massive wooden structure. The river is rushing madly on something like 50' below and one can hear the wood work creaking as the train slowly rolls over, slower than walking pace. This bridge known as "Vancouver Bridge" denotes ones lowest altitude for after this one begins climbing on a ledge on the rocky hillside, keeping about 30' about the rushing river. The curves are simply tremendous and it is wonderful how a train can keep on rushing along without even a few feet of straight. Up we climb alongside the river with vertical sides of rock until we notice on the hill the other side of the valley a climbing ledge on which we shall shortly be climbing in exactly the reverse direction to that we are going now. Soon after about another mile we cross a viaduct like a horse-shoe which reverses our direction, but transfers us from one hill side to another and now we leave the river in the depths below and begin

to climb over the Lebanon mountains. It is simply wonderful how any engine can pull itself, let alone a train up these hills, as it is so steep and all the time in and out according to the irregularities of the mountain side. It is simply a ledge cut in an almost vertical side, just wide enough for one train on a single line to

mountain. There was a little station we stopped at, and about a mile further on was a beautiful waterfall, the water falling from above our heads, under a bridge on the ledge and down to the depths below. I "flashed" my Arabic and asked the driver to go slowly so I could take a photo, and the old chap was good

enough almost to stop the train, so I will be anxious to see the result, but I am rather doubtful. Here's page 13 and we haven't got to Damascus yet!

As one eventually emerges from the climb up the valley, you enter a table land, right on top of the Lebanon



[Hartmann 2-8-0 263 and train on Bridge 12 over Ehrer, 10 May 1979]

pass. On the hill side of the carriage is the cut ledge of the rock right up against the window, and on the other one looks almost vertically down 4-500 ft on a rushing mountain torrent. Should anything happen it would of course mean instant death, for if the train should break away it would not mean many seconds before its speed was too great to manage the curves, and a derailment – well the ledge is so narrow there is only room for the train on the rails, and no room if it comes off! One quite grasps the side of the compartment at times looking down these awful heights and then occasionally seeing on the opposite hill the ledge you are shortly to traverse. Twice one is performing this horseshoe bend, climbing up the side of one hill until the valley is sufficiently narrow, then round one swings over a viaduct and back again along the valley on the opposite hill. At one time about 6 months ago one of our engines was going up the hill light, when the tender broke away, and went flying down the hill, over the top and crashed into the depths below. As we passed we could see it lying about 500 ft below us, with the bogie wheels torn off and hanging over the precipice! Well I cannot write any more now about this wonderful climb through the valley, but we will assume we are nearly at the top of the

Mountains. This is apparently a stud farm for camels, as there are literally millions. The train keeps flying along and still for miles and miles one sees nothing but camels, big camels, baby camels and camels of all sorts. We are now in the country belonging to the King of the Hedjaz and his troops are everywhere, armed to the teeth, also all the Bedouins simply bristle with ammunition knives etc. and look most imposing!! One station one passes on this table land has a good deal of Turkish Railway stock and rails badly damaged, evidence of a rather successful attack where the Hedjaz troops cut the line and cut off Johnies' retreat in the final stint. Otherwise there is nothing of particular interest to note, simply a flat table land surrounded with still higher peaks.

As the bridge over the Jordan was a five arch masonry bridge, [HR 31] the high steel girder bridge after Samakh was likely to have been the second Yarmuk bridge, that had been blown up in September 1918 and was later blown up again in 1946. [HR 81 & 106] This would suggest that the Vancouver Bridge that had the temporary wooden span that was not replaced until 1923 would have been the third Yarmuk bridge. [HR 81, 83 & 87] However, other sources suggest that it was Bridge 2. The photo on

the cover of Issue 7 and included in *Garraway – Father and Son* was probably taken just before bridge 12, the three arch horseshoe bridge over the Ehrer, a tributary of the Yarmuk.

The second horseshoe was surely at bridge 15 over the Zeidi just before the last tunnel, tunnel 7, below Tel-esh-Shehab. The little station was probably Zeizun as there are such waterfalls both above and below it but if the photo that Ron referred to was the one on the cover of Issue 7, it would have been Makaren. The station on the plain must be Mezerib and the damaged rail is likely to have been the outcome of Lawrence's attack there a year earlier [HR 79] and could even have included rail damaged when the original Damascus to Mezerib line was lifted in 1915. [HR 65]

In addition to the spectacular scenery, in 1979 we were intrigued to see what appeared to be the smokebox and chimney of a loco behind a wall some two to three hundred feet up the hill above the railway some way to the East of Makaren. In the mid 1990s enquiries at Dera'a suggested that it was not a loco boiler but



some form of mobile agricultural boiler. More recently, modern computer technology has made it possible to enlarge the relevant part of a telephoto photograph and confirm this.

Loco' above Makaren, 10 May 1979

I then found that three days later in 1979 I had taken a photograph of what could well have been two similar mobile boilers on the far side of the traverser outside the Erecting Shop at Cadem Works. It is possible that the Railway had a number of such mobile boilers available for use before the days of mobile electricity generators.

The van to the right of the boilers is also interesting. It is one of the Railway's steel lined armoured vans with rifle slits on each side. What could be an overhaul date of 22.9.37 can be seen its end.

Rick Tourret's book 'The Hedjaz Railway' was published in 1989 and Chapter 3 on the Haifa – Dera'a line includes a table (on pages 32 and 33) listing all the stations, tunnels and major bridges in the Yarmuk valley, based on official information from a variety of sources, and photographs of many of the bridges. Some time later I realised that this was not consistent with the diagram on page 73 of Hugh Hughes' 1981 book 'Middle East Railways'. Although the number of tunnels was the same (7) there were 16 rather than 15 bridges.

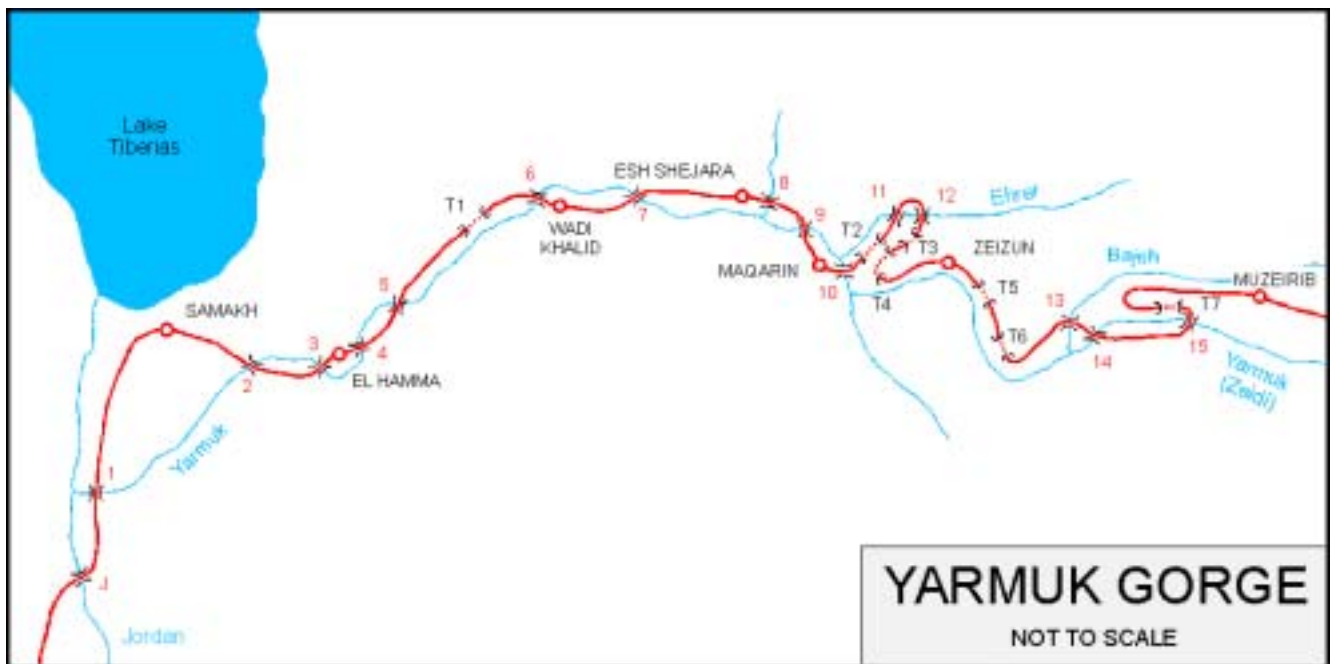
At intervals over the years I tried unsuccessfully to reconcile the two sources. It soon became clear that there is an error in

Hughes' diagram in showing the line crossing the Yarmuk on each side of tunnel 5. Both my memory and photographs confirmed that the line is well up the hillside all the way between Zeizun and bridge 13 over the Bajeh. However, this meant that I was left with one too few bridges instead of one too many. In 1996 after attending a conference in Jerusalem I was taken to the Golan Heights and on the way back was delighted to discover that I could see a distant view of part of the railway and one of the bridges, probably Bridge 3, from the road back down to Samakh. Unfortunately this did not help with the problems further up the Yarmuk. Since then, I have been singularly unsuccessful in getting hold of a detailed map of the Yarmuk valley, possibly because of the sensitivity of the borders in the region. However I did find one map in the British Library that, although it was not on as large a scale I would have wished, with the aid of a magnifying glass gave me the clue for which I was looking. This was later confirmed by military handbooks in the Imperial War Museum in London. These included descriptions of all the bridges and tunnels on the line with their main dimensions and location and stated that Bridge 8 was not over the Yarmuk but over a tributary to its North. This was confirmed by a fuller version of the photograph of the bridge that appeared as Rick Tourret's Plate 45. This showed that it had clearly been taken from across the main river.

The result can be summarised by the diagram below which is a modified version of the diagram on page 73 of Hugh Hughes' book.

Mobile boilers at Cadem, 13 May 1979





69:13.

JAFFA IN THE 1920's.

Chen Melling has come across an interesting old French language book in Haifa University library. Its title is "La Palestine Illustree - Vol. 2 - Jaffa La Belle" written by Francois Scholten and published by J. Budry in Paris in 1929. It includes half a dozen excellent photos relating to the local railways which were new to me, including one of the station itself and several showing the 60cm gauge tracks of 'Little Terezina' through the streets and alleyways on its way down to the harbour. Fortunately, it also has a shot of the main line standard gauge approach to the station, which shows the lower-quadrant, lattice post, semaphore home signal mentioned in 49:6:1, believed to be the only signal in the whole of Jaffa station. Because of sighting difficulties this was located on the right-hand side of a curve in a cutting, instead of the usual left-hand arrangement. The Chelouche Street bridge can be seen in the background. The semaphore signal appears to be of Railway Signal Co design if not actual manufacture - Saxby & Farmer built some semaphores to the RSC pattern for Palestine Railways. (P.C.)

69:14.

SHUNTING AND HOOTING IN 1953.

The Editor learned, when he was around 5 years old, a masterful piece of literature that went:

"I'd rather drive an engine than
Be a little Gentleman.
I'd rather go shunting and hooting
Than hunting and shooting."

He has managed to live according to this motto ever since. These immortal lines came to mind in receiving from Paul Cotterell a Memorandum, in English, dated 13th. August 1953, from J. Hardy, the IR Traffic Manager, addressed to the General Manager and clearly smarting at some (unrecorded) well-meaning, interfering unsolicited report by a Swiss railwayman or enthusiast. Paul notes:- "Johnny Hardy stayed behind in 1948, having been with PR. he was a big wheel in Maccabi Haifa soccer club for years. It seems he never learned Hebrew sufficiently to write memos to the boss." The papers are in file 99/Gimmel, "Ittuk" (i.e. "Shunting".)

"1. Shunting Engines. With reference to conversation on the 11th. inst., particulars of shunting engines used by the Traffic Department are given below:-

1. Jerusalem. A 'stand by' engine is kept during the week at Jerusalem for goods train No. 251 - whose engine immediately returns working the passenger train to Haifa. it also, in the afternoon, draws the empty wagons and prepares train

ready for despatch by the engine arriving by passenger train, which returns to Haifa. It also reverses the brakevan on the passenger train working. Its total shunting hours are approximately 3-4 hours.

2. Lydda. A shunting engine is provided at this station for 24 hours. Its functions are to break up all trains arriving and to make up trains for Haifa, Jerusalem, Migdal and and trips for Rehovot, Sarafand and Tel Aviv North. It also takes wagons to Ramle when required and places all traffic for Lydda station. It is necessary for the 24 hours, but could also at the same time deal with five times as much traffic. No additional engine is used for dealing with the Citrus traffic.

3. Tel Aviv North, Petah Tiqva and Ras el Ain. A shunting engine is provided for 8 hours from Lydda for placing loaded and withdrawing empty wagons at Tel Aviv North, also for marshalling empty wagon trains for Haifa. Engine taking loaded traffic from Haifa to Tel Aviv returns immediately with passenger train and the engine of last passenger train returns with empty goods wagons.

The engine also takes wagons destined to Petah Tiqva, which are detached from through trains Haifa - Lydda at Ras el Ain, places them, withdraws empties and takes them to Lydda for marshalling into trains for Haifa. Here again the engine could deal with five times as much traffic. During the citrus season the engine hours have to be extended to 16 hours in order to deal

with the later loading of citrus.

4. Haifa. The shunting engines is use in Haifa area during the summer months are:-

- (a). Port Area. 06.00 - 22.00.
16 hours.
- (b). Haifa East Station.
07.00 - 23.00. 16 hours.
- (c). Haifa Marshalling Yard.
07.00 - 07.00. 24 hours.
- (d). Haifa - Nesher Area.
07.00 - 23.00. 16 hours.
- (e). Oil Zone. 07.00 - 15.00.
8 hours.

2. The working of these engines is given hereunder:-

(a). Placing of empty wagons for loading in the whole area of the Port. That is Zone 4, Main Port and Jetty. the normal working hours of the Port are 06.00 - 22.00 hours, during which time it is essential to have an engine available for any demand made as to placing of empty or loaded wagons.

The engine normally places empty wagons for loading as required, draws the wagons when loaded and places loaded wagons for discharge and withdraws the empties. Such placing and withdrawing is done during the whole working day of the Port.

(b). This engine draws all wagons loaded in the Port from the sorting or Jetty sidings, draws them over the weighbridge for weighing and takes them to the marshalling yard. It also places and withdraws wagons from the various sidings adjacent to Haifa East: Military Siding Haifa Central, 'Bonded' Harbour St., 'Shemen', Rice Mills, Grand Moulins and Goods shed. The composition of practically every passenger train arriving has to be altered, which this engine has to perform.

(c). This engine breaks up all trains arriving and marshals all goods trains for departure, places and draws cripple siding and Engineering siding.

(d). This engine is also the 'trip' engine, taking empty wagons and placing them in the Quarry (km. 4.5), Military Oil Depot, NESCO siding and Nesher. It also draws all loaded wagons and brings them into Haifa Marshalling Yard. At 'Nesher' cement works it shunts wagons in and out of the factory as required.

(e). This engine takes all empty tanks to the Oil Installations and withdraws all loaded. At the installations it has to shunt tanks in and out of the filling points as they are filled, which means that it is constantly required. It also places and withdraws wagons from the P.E.C. sidings.

3. All these engines can cope with many times the amount of traffic they are at present called upon to do. No additional engine shunting power is arranged for example when the Nesher Coy. despatch 1000 tons of cement for export, receive a coal ship, nor when ships with sleepers, or wheat, sugar or flour and other commodities arrive simultaneously.

(i). During the citrus season, a further shunting engine is used for 8 hours a day to deal with this traffic specially as placings and withdrawals have to be arranged every half-hour.

(ii). Regarding the comment in the report of Dr. Zuber that the output of one shunt engine hour is 5.5 wagons, if the amount of traffic offered to the railway were increased from all sources by 600%, the same shunt engine power could deal with it, which would mean that 33 wagons would be shunted in one engine hour.

(iii). The comparison given by Dr. Zuber - comparisons are always odious - are noted, but I am not aware of conditions at Zurich and Winthertur; are they similar to those of Haifa, which is a loading point only, extending a distance of approximately 20 kilometres, or are they re-sorting junctions? Do they have regular daily traffic? Unfortunately these railways have not.

(iv). The question of shunting engine shunting power at Haifa is reviewed at a meeting held daily at 09.00 hours in my office, at which the Senior Station Masters of Haifa East and Port, Area Inspector and Chief Controller attend. It should be noted that at present

there is daily 80 shunting hours, for 5 days a week, on Fridays they are considerably reduced. This is 30 hours less a day than as quoted in the report of Dr. Zuber."

Notes. [These comments are by the Editor.]

A 'stand-by engine' implies one capable of working line traffic as well if required. Presumably one of the 4-6-2T or 4-6-4T locos, not an 0-6-0T. IR's other shunting stock at this time comprised the Nasmyth-Wilson 0-6-0T's and the two USATC 0-6-0T's. We see that seven 'shunters' are required, (with twelve sets of men) plus the 'stand-by' which doubles up to perform shunting duties in Jerusalem.

Migdal is now Ashkelon. Tel Aviv North is the later Bnei Berak. References to Military Siding at Haifa Central are unclear - was this sidings till used by the Israeli military, or was it an old name from Mandate times?

It is unclear what is meant by "reversing the brakevan on the passenger working", unless this refers simply to shunting a Brake/3rd. so that it was always at the rear of the train.

Clearly an 8-hour shift is standard for the crew, and hours are in multiples of 8. The engine might well continue longer, occasionally pausing for water and to have the fire cleaned.

It is interesting that there is no small diesel or a fireless engine for shunting somewhere so specialised and dangerous as the Oil Refineries.



69:15 Excavation works for the Modi'in Central railway station can clearly be seen in the center of the picture Picture from A Gazit

Back Cover: A bride dress from the fashion designer Mr.Yaron Minkovsky, a daily commuter on the Kfar-Sava-Tel-Aviv line, made of 6000 railway tickets collected from a recycle bin at Tel-Aviv Savidor station and photographed at Tel-Aviv University station

